



127 494

•

**ST. PAUL: THE HERALD
OF CHRISTIANITY**

•

ST. PAUL THE HERALD OF CHRISTIANITY

By

XENOPHON P. WILFLEY, A.M., LL.B., LL.D.



COKEBURY PRESS
NASHVILLE

IN APPRECIATION OF
MY MOTHER
SARAH PINDALL WILFLEY
AND
MY WIFE'S MOTHER
ELLA FORRIST GUTHRIE

PREFACE

THE form of presentation of the subject matter herein is due to the manner in which it originated. Each chapter of this book is the summary of a talk, delivered to a Bible class composed of men who had determined to review the whole of the life of St. Paul, with the New Testament as the basis of study, supplemented with historical information apart from, but consistent with, the facts found in the Bible text. From this viewpoint attempt is made to give a continuous narrative of the work and words of this missionary hero, in the light of the actual conditions surrounding him, throughout the varied experiences of his life. In order to meet the convenience of busy men and women who, though interested, might not otherwise undertake such a study, the discussion has been divided into a rather large number of short chapters, any one of which will require but a few minutes; and if all are read, a fair foundation may be laid for a more thorough survey of the activities of this outstanding Apostle of Christianity. In any serious consideration of this subject the Bible references, noted in the text, will furnish the ultimate benefit to be derived from the reading of suggestions such as are contained herein. It is with the hope that these observations will stimulate greater interest in the study of St. Paul that this volume is published.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION	11
I.	TRADITION AND EARLY ENVIRONMENT. .	15
II.	JESUS OF NAZARETH BEFORE THE GREAT SANHEDRIN	21
III.	JESUS OF NAZARETH BEFORE PONTIUS PI- LATE	28
IV.	STEPHEN ENCOUNTERS THE SPIRIT OF THE MOB	38
V.	DEFEAT OF A MISSION OF VENGEANCE ..	44
VI.	RETURN FROM A POSTGRADUATE COURSE IN ARABIA	50
VII.	RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE FOR LARGER SERVICE	56
VIII.	TRIUMPH OF THE DEMOCRACY OF GALILEE	62
IX.	AN APPEALING CALL FROM MACEDONIA	68
X.	A FLIGHT FROM FURY INTO ACHAIA .	74
XI.	PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD	80
XII.	BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING.	86
XIII.	THE FOLLY OF THE GALATIANS	92
XIV.	CHRISTIAN LIBERTY	98
XV.	ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAGANISM OF EPHESUS	103
XVI.	THE WISDOM AND POWER OF RIGHTEOUS- NESS	109
XVII.	INCORRIGIBLE CORINTH	115
XVIII.	THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY OF LIVING	121
XIX.	RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY	126

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. TRIUMPH AT CORINTH	132
XXI. SARCASTIC REBUKE AND INVECTIVE ..	138
XXII. INDICTMENT OF IGNORANCE AND INSIN- CERITY	143
XXIII. THE LAW OF FAITH	150
XXIV. THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT	156
XXV. LOYALTY TO LINEAGE	162
XXVI. CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONS- IBILITIES	169
XXVII. FEARLESS TO CALL OF DUTY	175
XXVIII. SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE THE HEBREW COURT	182
XXIX. SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE THE ROMAN COURT	189
XXX. A PERILOUS VOYAGE TO ROME.	196
XXXI. A MILITARY PRISONER WHEN NERO RULED ROME	203
XXXII. MESSAGE TO PHILIPPI WHILE IN CUSTODY	211
XXXIII. GNOSTICISM THREATENS THE CHRISTIANS OF THE LYCUS VALLEY	217
XXXIV. COMPLEMENTARY MESSAGE TO ASIA MINOR	223
XXXV. THE SOUL OF A SLAVE	229
XXXVI. A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY BEFORE "CÆ- SAR'S COURT"	235
XXXVII. MESSAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND CORREC- TION	242
XXXVIII. A RELEASED CALL TO ACTION	248
XXXIX. SUFFERING IN SERVICE.	254
XL. COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE TO THE END.	261

INTRODUCTION

IN the light of the many illuminating books, written by learned ecclesiastics, interpreting the writings of St. Paul, it seems presumptuous for a layman to attempt to offer any further observations on a subject that has been given such thorough consideration. It is not in distrust, but rather in deference to these instructive treatises, that the impulse, aroused by their fine influence, is indulged, to review in a somewhat different way the life of this commanding character of history. The fact that more has been written about him than about any man of his day, and more within this generation than during any like period, is sufficient proof that his precepts and example have furnished an inexhaustible subject of study, and that his career is still a commanding influence in the thought of the world. His utterances deal with a wide field of human endeavor and give practical suggestions to varied phases of individual activity. He interpreted, from both theoretical and practical viewpoints, the way of living taught by Jesus of Nazareth, with a definite purpose to bring a nobler spirit of happiness and a higher standard of living to all mankind. His long-continued influence upon the world has been maintained by reason of his capacity to comprehend the real significance of the lessons taught by the Nazarene. He demonstrated his ability to make practical application of these teachings to the daily routine experiences of the individual, as well as to the complicated social, economic, and political conditions of his day. His wise instruction is yet illuminating in working out the problems of our day, with the complex developments of a more advanced civilization.

No more striking individual experience is found in history than the spiritual enlightenment which Saul received, when he was at the threshold of a maddened effort at persecution, and about to make an intolerant attack upon the followers of the Nazarene who had fled from Jerusalem to Damascus. He was on the highway when his relentless purpose was relaxed, through that startling spiritual influence, and as he was brought to a realization that his whole program of life was about to be attuned to a finer application of love for God and man, his soul was fired with a new and marvelous conviction that eventually blazed into a flaming torch of eternal righteousness. That light has radiated so brilliantly, and shone so far, that it does not require the devotion of an ecclesiastic to appreciate its power; but it likewise makes appeal to every layman who is interested in the operation of the forces of the truth that make for upright living.

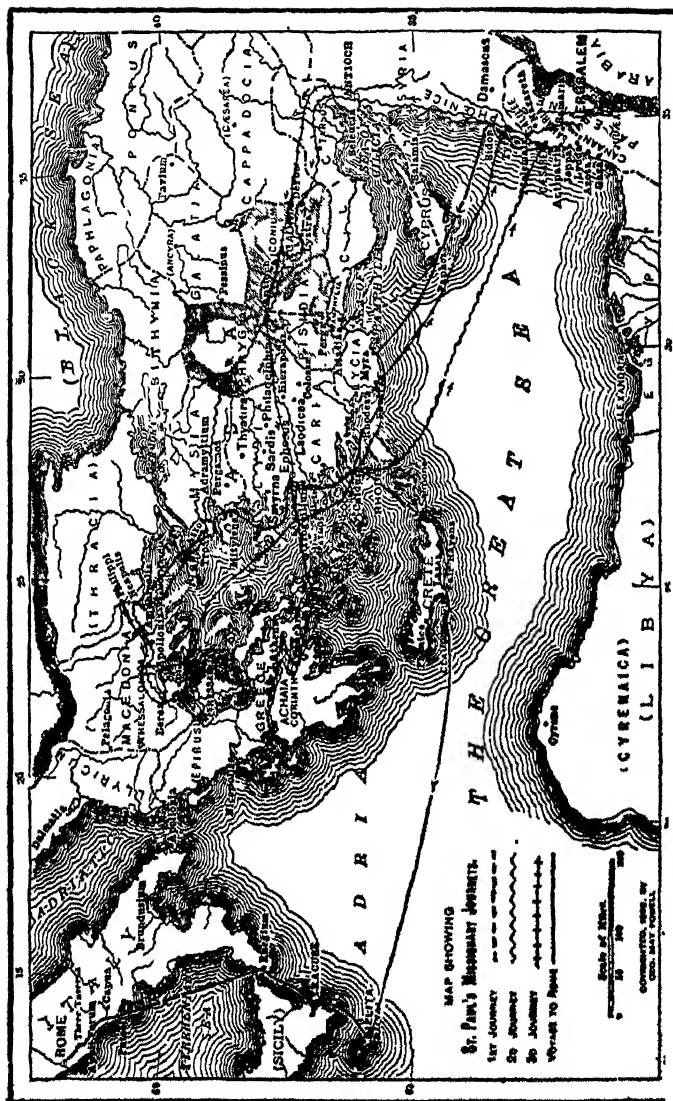
Under the inspiration of this new light in his life, a new impulse urged the Rabbi from Tarsus to an ambition, passing strange for that day, to carry to distant lands the message which the Galilean had brought to Jerusalem. The fact that he inaugurated the first significant movement in response to the injunction of the Master, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every living creature," adds to our appreciation of his initiative and industry. Protestant and Catholic alike exalt his example. In his broad-minded interpretation of the religion of Jesus Christ he recognized the fundamentals of Judaism, with emphatic expressions of profound appreciation, and indeed he made "the Jew first" in all his missionary efforts. The study of his life necessarily involves the review of cruel experiences, which he suffered at the hands of his people; yet their descendants, as well as those of his own followers,

have advanced into a saner spirit of religious relationship than existed in his day.

Mighty as has been the influence of St. Paul, it is not a prodigious task to make examination of his original teachings, difficult as it would be to appraise them. The thirteen letters and excerpts of six sermons which have come down to us, with Luke's biography in the book of Acts, include all the available original and authoritative data of what he said and did. If this is supplemented with the history of the time and of the places in which he labored, a truly comprehensive study is presented to both clergy and laity. No more interesting or important human agency has operated in the world during the last twenty centuries.

Authorities may differ as to the exact dates, as well as to the authenticity, of some of the letters attributed to St. Paul, but the salient facts of his career are fixed and beyond dispute. The supreme purpose of his teachings was to influence a *way of living*, applicable "to every creature," in accordance with the philosophy of life taught by Jesus of Nazareth, which is the most profound subject that has ever engaged the human mind.

A review of the record of his life and writings, as found in the New Testament, in an attempt to make a connected and continued survey of what he said and did, with the history of the people with whom he came in contact as a background, is indeed a worth-while study, fascinating in its varied aspects, all the way from his boyhood at Tarsus to his execution in old age on the Ostian Way.



I

TRADITION AND EARLY ENVIRONMENT

"I am a Jew, of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city. I beg of you let me speak to the people."—Acts 21: 39.

SAUL of Tarsus was a Roman Jew. His ancestors hailed from Galilee, whence they journeyed to Rome, either in search of better advantages or in bondage. Through the dispersion of the Jews, many moved to the business centers around the Mediterranean, while others, at various times, were carried in triumph to Rome, as captives from the lands invaded by the Cæsars in extending the Empire. If the immigration of Saul's forbears was voluntary, they may have purchased their Roman citizenship; otherwise, it was doubtless conferred by executive order, with their manumission, in recognition of conspicuous service, reflecting loyalty to the government. The franchise, thus acquired, carried special privilege and honor. Saul was proud of his citizenship as well as his lineage, which enabled him consistently to call each to his rescue in a tragic crisis. His parents, of the tribe of Benjamin, represented the noblest type of Jewish piety and were ambitious for their son to become a Rabbi—a "Teacher of Israel"—so his education was directed to that end. Since the services of a rabbi were gratuitous, his father taught him the craft of tent-making, in which he was engaged, that the son might be assured a livelihood; and by so doing he respected the celebrated Hebrew maxim (of Gamaliel) that "learning of any kind unaccompanied by a trade ends in nothing, and leads to sin."

The chief manufacturing industry at Tarsus was the weaving of goat's-hair into cloth, for garments, tent covers, and sailing vessels. At the beginning of the Christian era it was a "free city," of activity and wealth, the capital of Cilicia (a Roman province of Asia Minor), as well as a seat of education and Greek culture. This enabled Saul to profit by his trade while pursuing his studies.

To realize the advantage that comes from studying contemporaneous events, it should be kept in mind that while Saul was acquiring skill in his chosen handicraft at Tarsus, Jesus of Galilee, of about the same age, was, in greater obscurity, an apprentice at the carpenter's bench in Nazareth. The independent financial position of his parents, as well as local conditions, enabled the tentmaker to enjoy better educational advantages than the carpenter. When, at the age of fifteen, Saul had finished the curriculum at Tarsus, he was sent to Jerusalem to attend the Rabbinical College, called the "House of Interpretation," whose principal instructor was the celebrated rabbi, Gamaliel, one of the most distinguished of the doctors of the law during his time. Jerusalem was the center of Hebrew culture, and this institution was the only university of Hebrew learning then in existence, which enabled it to achieve a distinguished tradition for scholarly influence. The gracious interest of the broad-minded and generous-spirited Gamaliel quickened the alert mind of the ambitious youth from Tarsus to untiring activity. He devoted himself to hard thinking with boundless enthusiasm, that led him into wild excesses of cruel fanaticism, quite beyond the precepts of his eminent teacher. But the foundation of his educational training was laid under the influence of the noble spirit of the tolerant Gamaliel, and he was imbued with a genuine desire to know the truth.

While Gamaliel was a liberal Pharisee, after the traditions of his grandfather and predecessor, Hillel—"distinguished by the gentleness of his disposition and the liberality of his sentiments"—yet he taught Saul "according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers." His student became a devoted disciple of the law of Moses as well as a loyal advocate and intense partisan of the traditional teachings of the Pharisees, whose religion was founded upon the belief that the Mosaic law was "the very word of God." They emphasized strict observance of the divine code, not only in moral precepts, but especially in the punctual performance of ceremonial regulations, such as ablution, fasting, circumcision, sacrificial offerings, and other practices of similar import. While they believed in immortality, and, indeed, the resurrection of the body, the tendency of their teaching was toward an overvaluation of ceremonials. This was the only way to righteousness and salvation, according to their interpretation of the Old Testament. Their faith was founded upon this system of external observances and ritualistic practices; and they demanded strict obedience to their dogmas. The law of Moses constituted their religion, and their religion comprehended the whole of the law of life. These were the rules which guided Saul's way of living when he completed his education at Jerusalem and returned to Tarsus to begin his career as a rabbi.

Since the law of Moses was the subject of his study, as well as the object of his worship, his vocational training made him a finished lawyer. His writings indicate that he also became familiar with the Roman law, which controlled practically all the civilized world of his day. After he had completed his educational training, he returned to his native city and labored for fifteen years in obscurity as

a rabbi, during which time the carpenter of Nazareth had "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man." Jesus had journeyed from Galilee to Jerusalem and had proclaimed a faith—irreconcilable with the supremacy of the formalities of the Hebrew law—that relegated signs and ceremonials to a secondary position in religious fundamentals.

He gave a conception of God as an infinite spirit, of wisdom, truth, power, and love. The mysteries of life and the destiny of man had attracted the study of thoughtful people for centuries, and the Jews had well-defined notions of a Supreme Being and dogmatic conceptions of their relation to Jehovah. They were punctual in their observances of their religious ceremonies at home and were regular in their attendance upon the annual Passover celebration at Jerusalem, where they gathered from all parts of the country. There they assembled in the Temple—also an object of their worship—and encouraged each other in their devotion to their doctrines and their faith. The Jews regarded the teachings of the man from Galilee as a challenge to their traditions of legal ritualism and outward religious manifestations. They were jealous in their belief in the supremacy of the law of Moses, and particularly the formalities connected with the observance of the same. The teachings of the Nazarene did not condemn forms and ceremonials, but treated them as relatively of less importance than other religious observances. He was not inconsistent with the Hebrew tradition, when he emphasized obedience above burnt offerings and sacrifices. (1 Sam. 15: 22; Jer. 7: 22; Deut. 11: 26.) He preached a religion of conviction and proclaimed righteousness as a state of mind, where truth and not fear is the impelling force, where love of fellow man supersedes every impulse

of envy and hate, and the spiritual nature is made supreme through faith. This was shocking to the Jews, who harbored intense jealousies and disdained all other races as inferior to them—the “chosen people”—hence were not ready for the liberal interpretation of the injunction, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” (Lev. 19: 18).

The rulers of Israel first regarded the Nazarene with contempt, and afterwards with violent and deep-seated hatred. The conception of God, as expounded by him, and the way of living he was seeking to establish, were making sensational impression, to the disparagement of Hebrew dogmas. The appeal became so convincing as to cause widespread interest and concern. Strong men deserted the Jewish traditions and embraced the heresy of the Nazarene, whose disciples increased so rapidly that the Jews became furious and wanted to destroy them. When the Great Sanhedrin, which was the supreme tribunal of Israel at Jerusalem, arraigned the Apostles of the Nazarene with intent to put them to death, Gamaliel interceded and advised that they be let alone, with the injunction, “If this idea or movement is of human origin, it will come to naught; but if it be from God, you will not be able to stop it. You may actually find yourselves fighting God” (Acts 5: 38, 39).

The study of this new philosophy of life made a growing appeal to the people, not only those who lived in Jerusalem, but others who came annually to the paschal celebration, where opportunity was offered to discuss such subjects.

There were two classifications of Jews with reference to residence—the Hebrews, who never left the Holy Land, and the Hellenists, Greek-speaking Jews, who lived abroad. On the occasion of the great annual festival the Hellenists

returned to Jerusalem, but there was such jealousy between them and the Hebrews as to cause the former to build separate houses of worship, each representing a group of communities, with the result that there were synagogues in Jerusalem for the several political subdivisions, as Cilicia, Alexandria, and Asia. Those who had embraced the teachings of the Nazarene had no separate synagogue, but met from house to house, and of course worshiped in the Temple, where the Jews from every part of the country assembled.

The galling yoke of Roman dominion, the tithes and tributes exacted, and the burdensome observances imposed by the priestly rulers, caused the people of Judea to yearn for the prophesied Messiah. There was a large contingent from Galilee who contended that the Nazarene fulfilled the prophecy.

This created an intense issue and aroused bitter hatreds, which were intensified by a demonstration of the followers of Jesus, as they escorted him into Jerusalem, while shouting, "Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!"

The heralded visitor proceeded to the Temple and began to teach, whereupon the jealous rulers challenged his authority and sought a charge against him upon which he might be legally tried and condemned to death, under duly pronounced judgment of court. Their shrewd and subtle artifices of inquiry utterly failed, but, through bribery and betrayal, the Nazarene was finally brought to trial, which was of such significance, then and thereafter, in the current opinions influencing the life of Saul of Tarsus, that a brief review of this trial is essential to the proper study of the environment that contributed to Saul's conception of the problems and responsibilities of life.

II

JESUS OF NAZARETH BEFORE THE GREAT SANHEDRIN

(Matthew 26: 47-68; Mark 14: 43-65; Luke 22: 47-71;
John 18: 3-34)

"Such as are the leading men of the State, such is the
State itself."—CICERO.

NEXT to the battle field the court room has furnished the most thrilling scenes of history. Whenever human life or liberty is at stake, whether in trial of physical combat or before a judicial tribunal, interest centers with intense zeal. The most illuminating and fascinating chapters of history are accounts of judicial trials. They not only show the various methods of administration of justice, during the development of jurisprudence, but reflect the temper and habits of the people in their legal processes of establishing standards of society and have often marked epochs in history. The trial that has made the most distinct and lasting impression upon the world was that in which Jesus of Nazareth was arraigned at Jerusalem in A.D. 30. Considered purely from the viewpoint of a judicial inquiry, and in the light of the fact that the tribunals conducting the trial did not recognize the Messiahship of the defendant (and were therefore only held responsible for that degree of protection which the law guarantees to the most humble citizen), interest was naturally of different significance afterwards, when the proceedings were viewed with special reverence for Jesus Christ and the sublime inspiration he imparted to humanity.

One of the tribunals that conducted the trial of Jesus was Hebrew; the other, Roman. The Hebrew trial was before the Great Sanhedrin, composed of seventy-one Judges, who were regarded as the master spirits of Judea. The Roman trial was before Pontius Pilate, who represented the Roman Empire as Imperial Procurator (Governor) of Judea. This was shortly after Rome had extended its dominion over Palestine, and, under the judicial system promulgated by Augustus Cæsar, Roman courts were established coextensive with the boundaries of the Empire.

The only place where anything like a complete, original, and authoritative record of facts in the trial of Jesus may be found is the four Gospels of the New Testament. There are sufficient references in Josephus, Tacitus, the Talmud, and other ancient histories to confirm the trial and crucifixion, even though the statements are meager.

As to the specific tribunals conducting the proceedings, and the laws governing the same in such cases, history is quite adequate, without reference to the Holy Bible; and the facts from these two sources of information are thoroughly consistent.

The Great Sanhedrin was the court in which Jesus was first arraigned. It was the supreme tribunal of the Jews, which doubtless originated in a like sanhedrin established by Moses (Num. 11: 16). The powers were the most extraordinary of any similar institution in history. They were legislative, executive, and judicial, and its jurisdiction was civil, criminal, and ecclesiastical. Its official meeting place was an apartment in the Temple at Jerusalem, set apart for it, and called the "Hall of Hewn Stones." Its members received no compensation, as the position was regarded as a sacred sphere, quite beyond the

realm of material reward. The Great Sanhedrin conducted two trials of every capital case before the defendant could be sentenced. The hearing on the second day was not a trial *de novo*, but was a review of the original proceedings. A member who had voted for acquittal the first day was not permitted to vote for conviction on the second hearing, but a vote might be changed from conviction to acquittal, if valid reasons were given. Scrupulous requirements prevailed as to the character of the evidence, and in order to convict an accused person at least two competent witnesses were required, whose testimony must coincide in all material details.

Such a tribunal as this was certainly calculated to administer justice in a manner to command the respect of all subject to its jurisdiction; although it is but fair to observe that some historians claim that it did not maintain its traditional standards at the period we are now considering.

The Sanhedrists realized that the influence of Jesus was growing rapidly and had said among themselves (John 12: 19), "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him." This observation was made when the priests, scribes, and elders had assembled in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, and consulted together as to how to take the Nazarene and put him to death.

Numerous efforts were made to trap Jesus into some overt act or declaration that would furnish the basis of a charge of a capital crime against him. They presented a fallen woman, with request as to what punishment should be administered to her. If he opposed any punishment, this would be the basis of a serious charge against him, as the laws of Moses commanded that a woman guilty of adultery must be stoned. His answer, "He that is without

sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," baffled them.

They propounded further query, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" Here they sought to lay basis for a charge of treason against Rome. Again they were disappointed when he made answer, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." "When they heard these words, they marveled, and left him and went their way." Finally a Hebrew lawyer asked of him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus asked him, "What is written in the law?"—meaning the law of Moses. The lawyer answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus replied, "Thou hast answered right; this do, and thou shalt live." Love of God and love of fellow man have always been recognized as the outstanding commandments of the Hebrew law, and they constitute the foundation of all the teachings of Jesus. (In the light of these accepted facts there is a great temptation to a twentieth-century lawyer to ask, "Why should there not be greater coöperation between the forces of righteousness represented by the Jewish and Christian Churches, when their respective faiths rest upon the same foundation principles?")

Waiving further review of preliminaries, including the incidents connected with the arrest of Jesus, we pass to the trial, which must have opened shortly after midnight. The priests, elders, and scribes, composing the Great Sanhedrin, determined to proceed at this irregular hour, as they were impatient to dispose of the defendant. The charge of blasphemy was preferred, and witnesses were sought to present the evidence. After indefinite and con-

fusing efforts, at last two false witnesses were called, who were to testify, "This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days," but as to this the witnesses did not agree, which was essential to a conviction under the established procedure of the Great Sanhedrin.

Whereupon the high priest stood up in the midst and asked the defendant, "Answerest thou nothing? What is it which these witness against thee?" This was in direct violation of the Hebrew law. No defendant under a criminal charge could be required to testify in his own case. This is the law in our country to-day, and it is evidently derived from the ancient Hebrew practice. When no answer was made by the defendant, the high priest doubtless felt that a direct inquiry concerning the question, that was uppermost in the mind of every member of that high court, would provoke comment from the prisoner. Hence he persisted in the violation of their fundamental law, which he was presumed to hold inviolable, and boldly asked, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" While Jesus well knew that he could not be required to answer this question, yet its purport was so significant that he waived all privilege afforded him by the Hebrew constitution and promptly answered, "*I am.*" Under the Hebrew criminal procedure this was not sufficient for conviction, for corroborative testimony of two disinterested witnesses was still required. But the high priest seized the opportunity to accomplish his purpose. He rent his clothes, as the law directed, when blasphemy was uttered in the presence of a Judge, or even authoritatively reported to him, and said, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

What think ye?" They all answered, "He is guilty of death."

To be sure Jesus was not guilty of blasphemy as that term is generally understood in our day. Nothing is quite so inconceivable as to think that Christ would curse the name of Jehovah, or offer contempt or indignity to God. Even blasphemy as defined in Leviticus was not committed; but in Deuteronomy there is a broader definition, found in the thirteenth chapter and also in the eighteenth chapter. When Jesus answered the question propounded by the high priest, "Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" in the affirmative, the priests, scribes, and elders assumed that he claimed equality with God, in a sense that could be construed as blasphemy, under the Hebrew law. But if they had sought to determine the true attitude of the defendant, they would have discovered that he had made clear his position when he declared, "I can of mine own self do nothing. . . . But the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." And again he said, "The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." Only a few hours before, in the garden of Gethsemane, he uttered the prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." These utterances reveal the true attitude of the defendant and show that his position could hardly be construed as constituting heresy even under the Hebrew law.

Next morning the chief priest held a conference with the elders and scribes, and again they took counsel against Jesus, that they might put him to death. From this it may be reasonably drawn that there was a second consideration, or review of the case, as the law prescribed. Many steps taken in connection with the trial appear irregular—some technical, others material and fundamental; but for our

purposes, in the consideration of this question, it is not necessary to analyze the errors of this trial.

While the Sanhedrin had power to declare a defendant charged with a capital crime as "worthy of death," it had no power to impose the death sentence. This was during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, successor to Augustus, who had strengthened the Roman judicial system, which maintained jurisdiction over the lives and liberties of all the people within its boundaries. Less than a century before this time, Jerusalem had fallen before the invading armies of the Cæsars and been laid under tribute to Rome. The exact relation of Judea to the Roman judiciary is not definitely defined, but evidently the Sanhedrin had limited jurisdiction over offenses ecclesiastical, so long as its judgments did not affect the life or liberty of a subject or citizen. When Judea became a Roman province, its judicial machinery was administered chiefly by Roman procurators. The Great Sanhedrin had jurisdiction to cause the arrest of Jesus, and try him on the charge of blasphemy, which was a grave religious offense. It might declare, yet it could not execute, a sentence of death. This its members fully realized. They were compelled to submit their so-called judgment to the Roman governor who resided at Cæsarea, the Roman capital of Palestine, who was then in Jerusalem, at the Feast of the Passover, to preserve order during that time, when so vast a number of Jews from the surrounding territory were in the city.

In their exasperation and excitement they were determined to have their sentence confirmed by the Roman court, and they bound the prisoner and led him to Pontius Pilate.

III

JESUS OF NAZARETH BEFORE PONTIUS PILATE

(Matthew 27: 1-26; Mark 17: 1-15; Luke 23: 1-24;
John 18: 28-40, 19: 1-16)

"The wisdom of the lawgiver consists not only in a platform of justice, but in the application thereof."—
BACON.

THE residence of Pontius Pilate at Jerusalem was called the Prætorium, which was a part of the tower of Antonia, adjoining the Temple. It was built by King Herod the Great for his palace and is described by Josephus as royal and rich, built both for security and beauty.

The members of the Sanhedrin did not fully realize the difficulties they would encounter in presenting the case to the Roman government. To ask Pilate to review their trial on the charge of blasphemy would make no appeal to him, for he cared nothing for the Jewish religion, and hence would not be concerned with any offense this defendant might have committed in the nature of blasphemy. In fact, Pilate typified the Roman contempt for the Hebrew religion as well as the Roman hatred of the Jews, but his official duties involved such extraordinary responsibilities that he was required to conceal his prejudices.

As Procurator of Judea, Pilate was the immediate representative of Tiberius Cæsar, and his power was equal to that of the Emperor within that jurisdiction. The procedure in the trial was doubtless very similar to that at Rome, of which we have fairly adequate record. The judicial system perfected by Augustus Cæsar was the most

commendable department of the Roman government. The Roman law required an indictment, which was signed by the chief prosecutor and the witnesses who were to testify against the accused. This was the origin of our modern indictment by grand jury.

According to the Fourth Gospel, the scrupulous priests and elders would not enter the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled. Pilate yielded to their prejudices, which, indeed, he reciprocated, and held court in the garden, in front of the palace.

When all were ready Pilate asked: "What accusation bring ye against this man?" This was equivalent to a call for the reading of the indictment, that issue might be joined. It suggested a solemn judicial proceeding, for which they had not prepared, and, seeking to evade such issue, their spokesman made answer, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have him delivered up unto thee." This evidenced their desire for an immediate affirmance of their sentence, without trial, so that quick execution might follow.

But this did not comport with Roman sense of justice, and Pilate replied, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your own law," evidently unmindful that they were seeking judgment for a capital offense, or else he wanted to make more offensive the Roman sovereignty. With diplomatic patience the response came: "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This deference to Roman dominion carried with it respectful demand for capital punishment. But Pilate's attitude made clear his position not to stultify his government by passing death sentence without facts to substantiate the judgment of the court. They were faced with the stern necessity of making definite and specific charge as required by the Roman law.

Blasphemy was uppermost in their minds, but this was no offense against the Roman law, so they adroitly substituted the charge of treason. The substance of the indictment which they presented is found in the second verse of the twenty-third chapter of Luke's Gospel: "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a King." Pilate was not concerned about the first accusation, but to forbid tribute to Cæsar and lay claim to be a king was the gravest charge that could be preferred against a defendant in a Roman court, especially under Tiberius Cæsar, who was supersensitive about treason. Of course this charge could not be sustained by facts, as the accusers well knew, for only shortly before, in their intrigue to trap him, Jesus had made answer to their inquiry on this exact question, saying, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."

The charge that Jesus was perverting the nation is equivalent to saying that he was a seducer or heretic. From the viewpoint of narrow Jewish ceremonialism, there was some truth in the charge, but it did not have any significance to Pilate.

The charge of high treason and sedition against Cæsar was all the more serious because the Romans believed Palestine to be the rendezvous of pretenders to kingly power. This was during the time when Judea was passing through a period of great religious and political excitement. The Messiah was expected and a king was hoped for, and numerous pretenders appeared from time to time. The Roman governors were constantly on the lookout for acts of sedition and treason.

Therefore this charge aroused Pilate. When he had heard these accusations, he deliberately arose from his seat

and beckoned Jesus to follow him into the judgment hall, where he questioned him, which was possibly inimical to his judicial functions; but Pilate was not averse to finding Jesus guilty of treason. His first question was: "*Art thou the king of the Jews?*" After a brief colloquy Jesus answered: "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" Pilate knew from this answer that there was no possible rivalry between Christ and Cæsar. His kingdom was vastly different from that of Cæsar. The strength of Cæsar's kingdom included wide territory on three continents, but Christ's kingdom was beyond the horizon of Cæsar's domain. Let it be said to Pilate's credit that, at first, the Sanhedrin mob did not disturb his judicial equipoise. He was dealing with Roman law and he did not feel that this strange, dignified, and solemn man, whose kingdom was spiritual, could be a rival of Cæsar for earthly dominion, and hence the charge that he claimed to be a king did not alarm Pilate.

He pursued his inquiry into this new and strange kingship which was so different from the rule of Cæsar, and finally Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Pilate's interest in this defendant was again aroused and he digressed further and asked, "What is truth?" The significance of this question and the possible answer to it are manifest by the conclusion Pilate reached as to the guilt of this defendant. Pilate may have made this inquiry in jest or ridicule, but it is more likely that he was serious and deeply concerned when the answer was given. The brief account given in the Gospel of John does not include the answer Jesus made to Pilate. That he made answer there

can be no doubt, for he talked much of truth. He told the Jews who believed in him (John 8: 31), "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." He said to Thomas, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"; and to Philip, "Even the spirit of truth"; and to his disciples, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." His last prayer for his apostles was, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." The life of Christ was dedicated to truth, for by it he sought not only to make men spiritually free but to lead them to a conception of God, that would save them from their sins. He had proclaimed to the Pharisees the ultimate object of his mission on earth when he said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10: 10). He did not presume to advise Pilate of the law governing his earthly kingdom; but when it came to man's relation to God, he could give Pilate an insight into a realm of thought and action which had not concerned him in his official duties. Jesus linked truth with mercy, grace, compassion, long-suffering, righteousness, freedom, and a God whose law is truth. He stood for truth as broad as human sympathy, as strong as human passion, as absorbing as human ambition, that encompasses and controls every aspiration and activity of the human heart and binds it with love and faith in that Divine Spirit "whose voice is the harmony of the universe, whose throne is the bosom of God."

We do not know what answer Jesus gave to Pilate, but we know what impression it made, from the answer Pilate gave to the Sanhedrin mob that awaited his verdict in front of his palace. He satisfied himself as to the charge preferred against this defendant and gave his finding in

clear and unmistakable language, "I find in him no fault at all." Clear enough for an immediate judgment of acquittal, and under the law there was nothing left to a courageous judge but to enter such judgment. But Pilate lacked courage, and this was the beginning of a policy of vacillation combined with selfish cruelty that brought everlasting scorn and contempt upon his official record.

When the members of the Sanhedrin heard his sentence of acquittal, they were furious, and with redoubled energy and vindictiveness they presented the charge to Pilate in a new form, by declaring, "*He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.*" This was an adroit appeal to Pilate's prejudice, for Galilee was the "hotbed of riot and sedition" at that time. The mention of Galilee was a ray of light that suggested an avenue of escape to this cowardly judge. He asked if Jesus was a Galilean; and when he found that he was, he sought to evade responsibility by sending him to Herod, the governor of that province, called tetrarch of Galilee, who was on that very day in Jerusalem because of the Passover feast. So, guarded by Roman soldiers and surrounded by a jeering multitude, Christ, still shackled in chains, was led before Herod. The tribunal was again shifted; this time from a Judean procurator to a Galilean tetrarch.

"And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad; for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he had hoped to have seen some miracle done by him." (Luke 23: 8.) Herod greeted the prisoner in a frivolous spirit, but soon became serious.

His general attitude was never free from curiosity and jest, to which Jesus made no response. Herod did not

conduct a judicial trial, and as a matter of law he had no jurisdiction to do so; hence the Christ was justified in ignoring his cheap mockery with silent contempt. Herod evidently felt chagrined and mortified and finally became enraged that his scheme of folly was foiled by the dignified silence of the modest Galilean. To gratify his resentment he arrayed the Christ in a gorgeous robe and sent him again to Pilate. Be it remembered, this was the same Herod who had caused John the Baptist to be beheaded. His place in history is base and contemptible, and Christ well characterized him as "that fox." There was no trial before Herod, although "the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him."

When the defendant was again brought before Pilate, the crowd had increased and the mob spirit had grown more intense. Pilate yet had courage to declare unto them: "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him, and release him." (Luke 23: 14-16.) Here again his cowardice was shown; for he gave no reason for scourging him, after he had pronounced him innocent. His sense of justice quickly moved him again and he stepped forward and said, "Behold I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that *I find no fault in him*"; and standing beside Jesus, arrayed in the purple robe and crown of thorns, he continued, "Ecce homo"—"Behold the man." To which the mob made answer, "Crucify him, crucify him."

A further thought suggested to Pilate an avenue of escape. It was the custom, upon the feast day, to release

a prisoner (which is followed in our day by the Chief Executive, in many States, releasing a prisoner on a holiday); and Pilate asked of them whether he should release Jesus or Barabbas, who was well known to them, because he had recently committed murder in an insurrection. This crime was fresh in their minds, and Pilate no doubt felt that they would not consent to his release. But, to his surprise, they promptly called back, "Release Barabbas," demanding that Jesus be crucified. They gave as their reason, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." This did not appeal to Pilate's sense of justice, but the pressure of the mob spirit was evidently terrific. The responsibility weighed heavily upon Pilate, for he knew his assent meant Roman judicial murder. In his perplexity he again took Jesus into the judgment hall and nervously inquired of him: "Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer." Pilate impatiently pursued his inquiry further, saying, "Do you refuse to speak to me? Do you not know that it is in my power to release you or to have you crucified?" This was a correct statement of his authority. He could have released Jesus and given command to the Roman soldiers, who, with officers of the Sanhedrin, held the prisoner, to remove the shackles that bound him and give him protection from the fury of the mob; and his order would have been supreme. Jesus presently answered him, "You would have no power at all over me if it were not given you from above. So you are less guilty than the man who betrayed me to you." Pilate well realized that he was dealing with a case where innocence was unquestioned. He came from the judgment hall, evidently determined to release the prisoner, but the mob was growing more furious and there was desperate determination not to yield. Marking Pi-

IV

STEPHEN ENCOUNTERS THE SPIRIT OF THE MOB

(Acts 6, 7)

"I realize that patriotism is not enough; I must have no hatred or bitterness toward any one."—EDITH CAVELL.

WITH the crucifixion of Jesus, the Jews assumed that the heresy of the Galilean had been stamped out and his despised doctrines forever obliterated from the face of the earth; but this was a vain hope. Within a month after the crucifixion the chief priests were amazed to find that the believers in this strange faith had increased in Jerusalem by thousands. This stimulated the efforts of the opposition and intensified their purpose to such an extent that they gradually grew more desperate in their desire to counteract this inimical influence.

It was during the annual celebration at Jerusalem in A.D. 33 that the rabbi from Tarsus met, in the Cilician synagogue, a brilliant young Hellenist, named Stephen, who preached the doctrine proclaimed by the Nazarene, with "wisdom and spirit," and hence joined issue with the traditions, thoughts, and institutions then prevailing in the Holy City. It is quite possible that Saul, among others, attempted to answer Stephen. They realized that Stephen was "a man full of faith and power," and were humiliated that "they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake." There was general consternation that the people were surrendering their traditional teachings and accepting this new doctrine, which was not in harmony with the rabbinical system of religion.

Saul was endowed with rare intellectual equipment and held his beliefs with perfect confidence. He was deeply chagrined that Stephen had made a greater impression in proclaiming the message of the Nazarene than he had made in defending the traditional faith of the Hebrews. As he pondered over the situation, his disappointment grew into indignation and his mind became inflamed with jealous anger, which was the antithesis of the spirit of Stephen. Saul joined with others, of the same temper as that which obsessed him, and they caused Stephen to be arraigned before the Great Sanhedrin—the same tribunal which, three years before, had tried Jesus of Nazareth; and they preferred the same charge of blasphemy. Stephen fully realized the hopeless ordeal that confronted him. He knew that the court before which he stood was prejudiced, that he was prejudged, that there was no change of venue and no appeal—except, possibly, to a Roman court, and recent experience had shown the weakness of that tribunal. Civilization has always been dependent upon the integrity of the agencies administering justice, and no greater calamity can come to an individual than to be subject to the decision of a court that is void of judicial character.

The case was called for trial and evidently testimony was presented to sustain the charge that "This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us."

The high priest inquired of the defendant, "Are these things so?" This question was asked to comply with the provision of the law (of similar import to our present practice of asking a defendant if he pleads "guilty or not guilty"), which did not compel the defendant to testify,

but did require that he be given an opportunity to speak in his own defense. Stephen accepted the challenge and delivered a profound appeal (Acts 7: 2-60) in which he reviewed the history of Israel for nearly two thousand years—from the days when the God of Glory appeared unto Abraham in Mesopotamia to the time when Moses delivered the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt. He made cogent argument in support of his contention that they were seeking a more worthy object of worship than the Temple and the Law. He dwelt upon the persecution and triumph of Joseph, the perseverance of Moses, and the relative importance of the Temple—warning the court of the drift toward idolatry. He finally charged that the repeated persecution of the prophets was in violation of the law. Never did any one, on trial for his life, display greater courage or exercise more resourceful powers in marshaling facts into forcible argument. The criticism has been offered that Stephen was not historically accurate in some of his statements, according to the Old Testament. This may be true, in small measure; but an extemporaneous speech under such conditions should not be held too strictly to the exact facts of history, when much of it was traditional with the people of that time.

Stephen fully realized that for these beliefs and convictions he was doomed to die; yet he meant to make his position clear, drive his arguments to logical conclusions, and, if possible, implant truths that would subsequently bring his accusers to a realization that the ultimate object of their worship should not be an earthly temple, nor temporal laws, nor outward manifestations. "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: what manner of house will ye build me? saith

the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things?" (Acts 7: 48-50.)

He followed this with fearless and sharp rebuke and charged that they were betrayers and murderers of the "Just One."

When the members of the Sanhedrin "heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." And when Stephen described a vision of the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God, the seventy-one members of this most august court of all Israel "cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord"; and, without further deliberations, seized him; and, that the city might not be defiled with his impious blood, they dragged him outside its gate.

What more savage or disorderly condemnation was ever passed by a court? It could scarcely be characterized as a judicial proceeding, yet there evidently was some form of judgment upon which the execution was based.

In this infuriated mob was Saul of Tarsus, who may possibly have been a member of the Great Sanhedrin, although he doubtless did not sit in judgment in this case, as the qualifications of a member, sitting in capital cases, required that he should be a father, since such was presumed to be more merciful. They did not take time to prepare a cross for crucifixion, as in the execution of Jesus, but adopted a more convenient, and equally legal, method of execution by stoning. While the law provided that the witnesses who had given evidence in court should hurl the stones upon the prisoner, until life was extinct, Saul left that brutal work to his accomplices, with stronger arms, though not more intemperate vengeance, and contented himself by guarding their coats, while they per-

formed the merciless task. This cruel method of capital punishment was evidently more heartless than crucifixion, because the activity of the executioners not only stimulated their fury but excited the rabble to fiendish enthusiasm.

When they had all but finished their savage task, Stephen, with but a spark of life left in his crushed and mangled body, controlled his writhing agony enough to utter a prayer for this ferocious flock—which he did in a loud voice, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”; and as that supplication fell from his lips, he closed his eyes to a harrowing scene and trusted his soul to his faith in immortality.

What a contrast—this tranquil prayer of a dying saint with the hideous epithets of a maddened mob—“and Saul was consenting unto his death.”

This was a strange experience for the rabbi from Tarsus. Never before had he heard a man pray for his enemies, nor witnessed such resolute calmness of mind toward such brutal cruelty, administered with heartless glee, amid rejoicing at the agony of suffering in the throes of death. The stoning of Stephen can only be regarded as judicial murder, extremely shocking in all its bearings.

The speech in the Cilician synagogue, the argument before the Sanhedrin, and the prayer for those who administered the cruel death punishment, made more impression than was then realized. The sublime influence of this saintly martyr was manifest upon the life of Saul in later years, and it is hardly possible that his contact with this man of “faith and power” could ever have been forgotten. At the time, however, the utterances of Stephen seemed to feed the fire of fury in the hearts of the Sanhedrists and their followers, quite as much as the trial and execution of the Nazarene. They were inflamed to such a degree

that they determined to drive out or destroy every one who had embraced the teachings of the Christ; and Saul offered to lead the crusade. Such leaders as Gamaliel were no longer able to furnish adequate protection to the followers of Jesus, and they fled for their lives before the violent fury of the Hebrews. The Roman authorities treated the situation as an ordinary religious quarrel, not infrequent in those days, and offered no protection.

The most active agitator in this general persecution was the virulent rabbi from Tarsus. By his own words he described the zeal and intense fury that fired his efforts in leading the movement to exterminate the recreants of Hebrew tradition. He "made havoc of the Church," "entering into every house," and "committed to prison" men and women who were "scourged in many synagogues." He said, "I persecuted this way unto death, bonding and delivering unto prison both men and women," and "when they were put to death, I gave my vote against them." This has been construed to mean that he was at one time a member of the Great Sanhedrin. While he possessed the mental qualifications and education to be classed with "the master spirits of Judea," as the members of the Sanhedrin were regarded, there is no conclusive evidence that he was ever a member of this supreme tribunal.

The result of this persecution at Jerusalem did not intimidate the new converts to abandon their faith; but rather than surrender their convictions they fled into distant lands, "and Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," determined to follow them "even into strange cities."

V

DEFEAT OF A MISSION OF VENGEANCE

(Acts 9)

"When you have settled what is the chief end in life, you have settled everything else."—WOODROW WILSON.

STIMULATED by the spectacle of riot, attending Stephen's cruel death, Saul sought activity to gratify his restless mind. He went, on his own initiative, to the high priest, for "authority and commission to the synagogue at Damascus," to apprehend the fugitive converts, who had fled thither, and bring them to Jerusalem to be punished. The Great Sanhedrin exercised jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters throughout all Judea. Armed with adequate credentials from the supreme tribunal, Saul started on his journey, leading a retinue of uncongenial court officials and fanatics. His mind was inflamed, not only by the fury of the mob that had executed Stephen, but by the punishment administered in cruel and brutal fashion to others of the same faith. He had been maddened into a desperate and determined purpose to punish or destroy every one who professed belief in the new faith. The Great Sanhedrin viewed with alarm the influence of Jesus and had encouraged the people to pursue his followers, that his teachings might be blotted from the earth.

Saul started on this journey with a purpose as fixed and furious as the combined forces of hate, jealousy, and intolerance could create. There was no compromise in his heart. His mission was not to upbraid, not to persuade, not to convert and save, but to punish and destroy. Without mercy or compassion, his whole nature was dominated

by the vilest hate, and he was infuriated with a base anger that craved destruction—swift and certain—without any pangs of conscience and without any restraining influence of justice. A purpose, born of bitter prejudice and fierce vengeance, to pursue and punish human beings, whose only offense is a conviction founded on love and service for God and man, is about as vicious an impulse as the human mind can conceive.

The distance from Jerusalem to Damascus, by the route Saul is presumed to have taken, is about one hundred and forty miles. While the imagination of the artist has pictured his caravan as on horseback, it is more probable that they journeyed on foot, and that Saul had little conversation with his companions, but rather devoted his time to reflection as he walked by day and lay in his tent at night. A journey often furnishes the traveler splendid occasion to take inventory of his mental attitudes. From day to day, on this mission, Saul had opportunity to reflect upon the recent tumultuous experiences at Jerusalem. He was a student. In his calmer moments he was seeking the truth. A man with such mental equipment could not, in the candor of silent thought, forget the sincerity of Stephen in the debate in the Cilician synagogue, nor the masterful argument in his own defense before the Great Sanhedrin. Above all, he could not fail to be impressed with the courage and faith with which he met death, and the sublime prayer for his enemies as he expired under their brutal blows. He must have turned these experiences over in his mind many times, and, in the conventional phrase of to-day, they doubtless produced a "strange complex." When Saul started on this mission he was in a stubborn and sullen, as well as determined, frame of mind, yet his trained intellect naturally operated along logical

lines, and he experienced a fierce inward struggle between conflicting appeals of reason and prejudice.

The most beguiling influence that operates upon the human mind is prejudice. It resists reason with a self-righteous resentment and shrinks from every appeal of justice and truth. Saul's prejudice was developed to the *n*th degree. His commission authorized him to go to Damascus, and "if he found any men or women there who belonged to the Way, he might bring them in chains to Jerusalem." What Way? The way of living, taught by Jesus of Nazareth, whom Saul regarded as a crude carpenter, a false pretender, a homeless vagrant, a vile heretic, seeking to change traditional customs in a manner which, he thought, meant the destruction of a nationality.

Saul was a man of fire always, and his zeal as a persecutor of the followers of Christ was manifest in a fiery passion of intolerance, as he journeyed to Damascus. But before he reached that ancient city, whose history then covered a period of two thousand years, and when he was in sight of those ancient walls and roofs, which shielded and protected the innocent victims of his desperate purpose, the grip of hate that obsessed him relaxed, and there swept into his mind an influence of marvelous power that, without warning, uprooted the fury of his anger and left him a bewildered wreck on the roadside. Great and intense personalities have intense feeling and experience extraordinary sensations with greater sensitiveness than those who are thoughtless and indifferent. Saul had long been intensely religious. He thought he knew the truth. To him the law was a revelation from God. He persuaded himself that he was impelled by a righteous impulse to prosecute this mission. In such a situation he experienced the most thrilling sensation that ever arrested the deter-

mined purpose of mortal man. A sudden light flashed around him from heaven, which blinded him, and he fell to the ground. The external features of this experience—the lightning, the prostration, the blindness—are regarded by many as of extraordinary significance. The peals of thunder and the flash of lightning are always thrilling, and indeed startling when in such proximity as to shock the nerves of the observer. But on this occasion there was a power greater than physical phenomena, which was so plainly manifest, that it was as if a voice spake and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Strange admonition! But we have Saul's own word for it, declared to "men, brethren, and fathers" when he was seized in the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 22: 6-16), and again before King Agrippa at Cæsarea (Acts 26: 12-23). This is not tradition: it is autobiography.

What impressed Saul was not the physical manifestation, but a divine disclosure to him, of Jesus Christ, as being in truth the reflection and revelation of God. Thus he was brought to the realization that he had missed the finer meaning of life, and that his dominant aim had been based upon a gigantic misconception of the very purpose he had sought to pursue. Martin Luther, centuries after Saul, was overtaken in a forest by a thunderstorm and he was suddenly brought to a new conception of the truth of God. His sermons, texts for which were taken from the epistles of the convert from Tarsus, stirred Europe more profoundly than any other utterances of his day.

John Bunyan was also conscious of hearing a voice which he thus describes: "It would sound so loud within me, yea, and, as it were, call so strongly after me that once, above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had, behind me, called me."

The thunder and lightning doubtless arrested Saul's attention, as they did those with him; but the voice which he heard, and which, he says, those who were with him did not hear, was the proximate cause of the change that checked him on the broad road to disaster. The voice that arrested his attention had been waiting an opportune time, if indeed it had not called before. Sometimes the mind is so absorbed that an audible voice is not heeded. Sometimes the voice of conscience calls loud and long with no response. Sometimes the "still, small voice" is clear to one in close proximity to many others, who are totally indifferent. The call of conscience is personal—likewise, the response to that call.

The external setting of Saul's experience should not obscure the chief factor, which was the spiritual influence that captured him. The physical blindness that he experienced was temporary, but the spiritual enlightenment was permanent. The thunderstorm was neither extraordinary nor unusual in that part of the world at that season of the year. But in this instance it was also psychological. Saul had pondered the profound words of truth proclaimed by a saint, in whose death he rejoiced, and those words found lodgment in the fertile soil of the rich intellect of this learned ecclesiastic, so that when his body was electrified by the current from the thundercloud, the shock stimulated his soul for the witness of the Holy Spirit. An extraordinary experience is sometimes necessary to release the mind from the tyrannous grip of prejudice and error. Thunderstorms are fine to clarify the air, and the shock of lightning excites the mind and may furnish a stimulus to rid it of pernicious influences that encounter its finer processes; but was it the thunder and lightning that had the dominant influence on this furious fanatic?

A mind that yearns to know God will eventually hear the voice of conscience, for through it he speaks to each of us, sometime, somewhere, somehow. His voice is not confined to occasions when lightning electrifies the air. In this instance, and at this juncture, a great mind, that had been stubborn—aye, hateful—graciously and gloriously yielded to the light of an imperative conviction.

This was the result of influences operating from within, vastly more marvelous than the external forces—thrilling as they were. Saul was brought to the realization that righteousness does not rest in the law, even though it be wholesome and sound; nor is it embodied in a temple, magnificent though its proportions may be; nor is it circumscribed by ritualistic forms, even when observed with dignity and reverence; but that it is a conviction that dominates every impulse of the human mind and directs its every activity, with genuine love for God and for all humanity, and earnest desire for a pure heart and an upright spirit. This fundamental change, coming at the very height of his burning zeal, when he was resisting and seeking to destroy the very influence that had now seized him, made Saul's conversion a spiritual revolution. Marvelous power! There is nothing comparable to it in all the influences that have ever operated upon the thought and conduct of men. No wonder the reaction was so great that for three days he neither ate nor drank—but prayed in silence; and when he realized the import of this new conviction, he rejoiced to surrender the commission issued to him by the high priest at Jerusalem, and to accept a very different authority, to go back to his own people and to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God."

VI

RETURN FROM A POSTGRADUATE COURSE IN ARABIA

(Galatians 1: 16-18; Acts 9: 20-29)

"But when it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus."

—GALATIANS 1: 15-17.

SAUL left Jerusalem under the urge of a passion for activity and destruction; shortly after he arrived at Damascus ye yearned for tranquillity and reflection. His experience on the highway had jarred him, body and soul, and had revealed a conception of God, involving duties different from those he had theretofore performed. He felt that he was not prepared to meet his responsibilities under this new relationship, until he had made further preparation. He had always been zealous in his religious work; and when he realized that he had been operating from an erroneous viewpoint, he was deeply perplexed. This new conviction brought a new inspiration that demanded new attitudes in Paul's activities. He was well aware that his religion had been revolutionized, and that it would require time to attune himself to this wondrous transformation. While he had subdued envy, hate, and jealousy, he had not become disciplined to the way of living in which love, service, and freedom are dominant and faith is supreme. He sought companionship, "not with flesh and blood" (Gal. 1: 16), but with God alone. Like the Master (whose

teachings now guided him) after his baptism, he longed for "the wilderness." If the Christ found it necessary or helpful to spend forty days in solitude pondering over perplexities which crowded upon him, what greater need had Saul. It is to his credit that he appreciated his limitations. With all the educational training he had received under the Greek instructors at Tarsus and the learned rabbis at Jerusalem, he felt impelled to spend a postgraduate period with God as his only preceptor, to direct him in the readjustment of his program of life, and to enable him to meet his personal responsibilities to God, in performing his mission on earth.

He left Damascus and went into Arabia, possibly beyond the desert, to those mountain heights by the Red Sea, where Moses and Elijah had gone; and in that vicinity he spent the remainder of that year, all the following, and part of the third year. Doubtless he had some contacts with people, and possibly visited the city of Petra—whose marvelous ruins surpass any of the ancient cities of Arabia and are yet extraordinary and interesting; but there is no evidence to modify his own statement that he "conferred not with flesh and blood." His trained intellect furnished him fine foundation for helpful reflection and enabled him to concentrate all the forces of mind and heart upon his new conception of God, with the result that he was able to attune himself to his new convictions for long-sustained and heroic activities in the cause which he had championed. The elements of Jew, Greek, and Roman were so mixed in him that his intense religious nature sought thoroughness of preparation for ambitious accomplishments. His Hebrew spirit was devout; he was "debtor to the Greek" for his learning; and his Roman environment inspired magnitude of purpose and effort. He was preparing himself for

a world-wide program of Christian discipleship. No more ambitious purpose ever engaged the mind of a human being.

While he was a loyal Jew and loved the people of his lineage, his new vision impelled him to study also methods of approach to the Gentiles. He was seeking to comprehend the significance of the conviction that possessed him. To compensate, as far as possible, for his misdirected energies in persecuting the followers of Christ, he was preparing to proclaim the teaching of the Nazarene with all the power and resources he could command. His devotion to the Hebraic traditions was so indelibly impressed upon his methods of thought and action that it was not easy for him to revise his program of life, and, but for the genuineness of his convictions and the enthusiasm of his nature, he might have become depressed. He was preparing for even greater activity, but from a different standpoint, which meant fundamental change in his whole course of conduct. He knew what such reverse action meant, and he was not unmindful of the necessity for preparation for fierce conflict, for he well knew the character and caliber of those who would resist his new philosophy of life. He was seeking to equip himself thoroughly and to fortify his convictions for formidable conflict.

With his preparation in Arabia, he returned to Damascus and began preaching the faith he but recently had sought to destroy. This was the beginning of a career that is marked by more thrilling crises than that of any other man in the religious history of the world.

He delivered his new message at Damascus with such boldness that his old associates sought to assassinate him; and to make certain the accomplishment of that purpose, "the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison" (2 Cor. 11: 32), in his de-

sire to apprehend Saul, who averted the danger and escaped through a window of a house overhanging the municipal wall, by being lowered in a basket at the still hour of night. He overcame any feeling of discouragement which might have come to him, by starting back to Jerusalem over the road that he had traveled three years before—but in such a vastly different frame of mind. We can well imagine that as he journeyed he meditated over the reception he would receive when he reached the Holy City. He doubtless anticipated amazement in his old teacher, Gamaliel, disappointment in his former associates, and disgust and resentment from worshipers of the Hellenistic synagogues. But the courage of his convictions and his supreme confidence in his beliefs dispelled all fear in his purpose to bear testimony of his new faith to his old comrades.

When he reached Jerusalem he encountered the hatred of the Pharisees, who regarded him as a deserter, and the suspicion of the followers of Christ, who were slow to grant him confidence. He was not discouraged. His attitude was that which he subsequently expressed in his letter to the Philippians: "For his sake, I have lost everything and think it rubbish, in order to gain Christ and be known to be united to him, with any uprightness I may have, not based on law, but coming through faith in Christ." He finally met Barnabas, and through him Peter, whom he went to Jerusalem to see (Gal. 1: 18), and whose guest he was for fifteen days. He also met James, the brother of Jesus, who evidently did not actively join his followers until after the crucifixion.

Barnabas stood sponsor for Saul in Jerusalem as "he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus"—until he had a vision and warning to depart in haste, because of a

conspiracy to put him to death. He needed no advice as to the spirit of those constituting that conspiracy, for he knew their temper of old, and in addition he had but recently been debating with them in Jerusalem, concerning the new faith he professed to them. No one knew better than Saul the character and determination of the conspirators. His good sense dominated his zeal, and, with the aid of his friends, he escaped to Cæsarea, and from there he went to Tarsus, where he spent possibly eight or nine years in obscurity—doubtless amid discouragements. We cannot conceive that Paul was inactive in his "home town," but human nature has always been slow to follow a local product into a new field of thought or action. However, he did not confine his work to Tarsus, but preached in the neighboring regions of Syria and Cilicia (Gal. 1: 21).

He grew in faith and power, and finally Barnabas joined him at Antioch, where they preached for a year and had many converts among the Gentiles. Barnabas had sold his lands and "brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4: 37). In his earnest consecration he had been much impressed with Saul, and sought his co-operation for special work at Antioch.

Thus Jews and Gentiles for the first time in any considerable numbers united, under the preaching of Saul and Barnabas, in the common belief that Jesus of Nazareth was the Saviour of the world; and such believers were for the first time called "Christians" about the year 44 A.D. The foundation of the faith was laid at Antioch, before the visit of Saul and Barnabas, by the refugees from Jerusalem, following the martyrdom of Stephen.

There were in the Church there "certain prophets and teachers" (Acts 13: 1), heroic souls, who had withstood the pressure of persecution and oppression, and had so

strengthened their influence that they were not subject to the perils that had formerly threatened them. It was under the inspiration of this group, and the courage and valor that possessed them, that Saul realized the time had come for wider activity in "the work whereunto he had been called," which was consonant with the injunction of the Master to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Here was the origin of the idea of Gentile Christianity and the inception of its real missionary movements.

.

VII

RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE FOR LARGER SERVICE

(Acts 13, 14)

"What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult to each other?"—GEORGE ELIOT.

WITH purpose as determined as when he left Jerusalem for Damascus, but with very different attitude toward all mankind, Saul sailed with his coworkers, Barnabas and John Mark, from Seleucia, a seaport near Antioch, for Cyprus, an island in the Mediterranean, less than one hundred miles away. Barnabas was considered as the leader of the group. He was a Greek-speaking Jew, a native of the island, and John Mark, his cousin, was an attendant, in somewhat the same capacity as when he later accompanied Peter, which furnished him splendid background for the preparation of the Gospel which bears his name. The incident of most importance upon the island of Cyprus was at Paphos, its capital, upon the western coast, where Sergius Paulus, the Roman Proconsul, a disciple of astrology, summoned the missionaries before him and "heard them gladly." His official astrologer, Elymas, whom he regarded as a prophet, was present, and his frequent interruptions finally aroused Saul's resentment, and he rebuked him severely. The missionary's argument so completely shattered the shackles of superstition of the Proconsul that he abandoned his belief that his destiny was determined by the movement of the stars and, "being astonished at the Lord's teaching," embraced the faith of the missionaries, which gave them much-needed encouragement.

The contact with a larger proportion of Roman people

upon the island, and the more intimate prospect as he journeyed farther, furnished appropriate occasion for Saul to abandon his Hebrew name and adopt the use of his Roman name "Paul."

Proceeding across the Mediterranean, the missionaries landed in Pamphylia, on the south coast of Asia Minor, where John Mark withdrew and returned to Jerusalem, the home of his mother. Barnabas and Paul traveled inland, over the lowlands of Pamphylia, and up the mountains of the Roman province of Galatia. They stopped at Antioch, a "free" town, of some 3,600 feet elevation, which, to distinguish it from other cities bearing the same name, is referred to as "Pisidian Antioch," because of its proximity to Pisidia, the district immediately north of the plains of Pamphylia. This was evidently one of those journeys which Paul afterwards described as having been traveled "in peril of rivers and in peril of robbers," contemplation of which possibly may have influenced John Mark in deserting his comrades.

At Antioch they met the Greek physician, Luke, who rendered professional services to Paul, was converted and later became one of his chief coadjutors. He was thus enabled to acquire, through personal contact and observation, the information for the book of the Holy Scriptures which bears his name, as well as the illuminating story of the Acts of the Apostles, carrying the account of Paul's life, including synopses of six of his sermons or speeches—all that have come down to us. The first of these, delivered upon invitation, after the Jewish custom, at the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, reviewed the history of the people of Israel from their bondage in Egypt to the coming of Christ (Acts 13: 17-39), in style quite similar to the address of Stephen before the Great Sanhedrin. His declaration of

faith was very different from the Mosaic law, which his auditors held supreme. He preached the Messiahship of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles, which displeased the former and delighted the latter. He sought to show that Christianity was not an unauthorized and alien system of faith and worship, but a natural and legitimate outgrowth or development of the Jewish religion. But he did not ask the Galatian Gentiles to embrace Christianity by keeping the laws of the Jews, in observing their ceremonies; nor did he exact circumcision, which was the more significant, because it had been the required rite of entrance into the Jewish nation. This policy of Saul constituted a radical departure, and the wholesome reaction to it vindicated his abandonment of the old system for a new spirit of freedom. When the whole city turned out to hear him on the following Sabbath, he warned the Jews that if they did not accept his teachings he would devote himself to the Gentiles. This was the inauguration of a program to create churches separate from Judaism—indeed the real beginning of Gentile Christianity. The message made a great impression upon the Gentiles, not only in Antioch but throughout the surrounding country. With the issue thus defined, the jealousy of the Jews was aroused. Stimulated by encouragement from their wives, the magistrates sentenced the missionaries to expulsion from the town, upon the charge that we would to-day call "disturbing the peace," which they termed "a menace to the public peace."

The Royal Road, built by Augustus, led from Antioch to Lystra, with Iconium intervening, and but a short distance from the highway. Here, as at Antioch, there was a Jewish settlement, which attracted Paul and Barnabas and paved the way for preaching in the synagogue, where both Jews and Greeks were converted. This aroused the

animosity of the unbelieving Jews, who, failing in their appeal to the magistrates, but receiving tacit encouragement from them to proceed in their own way, joined with Gentiles in a conspiracy to kill the missionaries. The plot miscarried, as it was discovered by Paul and Barnabas, and they escaped to Lystra, where there was no Jewish community, hence no synagogue; but the market place furnished audience and offered opportunity for Paul to preach. Lystra was a Pagan city, and consequently indifferent to Paul's teaching until one day he observed a disabled youth listening to his appeal, and said to him in a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet." The well-known cripple immediately sprang up and began to walk. The heathen were startled, for they had a tradition that the gods could, at their will, descend from heaven and walk upon the earth.

The crowds raised a cry in their native vernacular, not understood by Paul and Barnabas, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men," and soon they were seeking to worship Barnabas as Jupiter and Paul as Mercury. They prepared for elaborate ceremony to honor their heavenly guests. There is a tradition that bulls with horns wreathed in garlands were driven by the priests of the local temple of Jupiter, followed by the Pagan worshippers, to the place where the missionaries were staying, to offer sacrifice to them. Paul was quick to protest and to give assurance to the Pagan priests that he was only mortal, and he quickly took advantage of their attention to declare his purpose to turn them from idolatry to the living God. The resentment of the priesthood at this declaration was encouraged by Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who were attracted by the sensational excitement, and, recognizing Paul as a recent visitor in their respective

communities, denounced him with such vigor that they incited a riot. With the aid of the mob, the plan that had failed at Iconium was pursued. Paul was carried outside the city and pelted with stones until he was unconscious, and his body was abandoned, for they were sure that he was dead (Acts 14: 19). When his friends found him he was prostrate, but under their care he was revived and soon was able to continue his journey.

The conversion of Timothy was large compensation for Paul's suffering at Lystra, and it is a reasonable surmise that he was taken to the home of Eunice, the mother of this young convert, where he was sufficiently recovered from his wounds (whose scars he carried the rest of his life) to flee early the next morning from further brutal violence of his implacable enemies. The near-by village of Derbe furnished a haven for Paul to regain his strength and, with it, determination to retrace his route through southern Galatia and to revisit the places of recent revolt and riot.

At Derbe the missionaries were no great distance from Tarsus; thence they could have journeyed, even through the difficult mountain pass, and from there back to Antioch in Syria, whence they started on this perilous mission. But there is no evidence that they ever entertained such an idea. The courage of Paul has already been observed, and again it is manifest in a determined and unflinching purpose to establish a church at each of the towns of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, from which he had but recently been expelled by forces of fury, ignorance, and intolerance. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." (Acts 14: 28.) With this accomplishment Paul and Barnabas

were ready to return and report to the disciples at Jerusalem.

Reaching the province of Pamphylia, they "spoke the word at Perga." From there they traveled to the seaport Attalia, and after preaching there they embarked for the port near Antioch in Syria. Thus ended the first missionary journey, of more than 1,400 miles, covered in approximately two years, which had opened wide the door of Christianity to the Gentiles. Paul had superseded Barnabas as the leader of the missionary movement.

The Church from whence they started was assembled to hear their experience. They had a thrilling narrative to relate—truly an inspiration to any one seeking to promote the missionary cause. Account of their preaching had preceded them, doubtless through the representatives from Galatia attending the Passover at Jerusalem. Their return was not celebrated, but censored, by what, in our day, would be termed an "investigating committee." A deputation met them at Antioch (in Syria), representing the Pharisaic portion of the Church, and made grievous complaint that Gentiles had been received by the missionaries in Galatia, without requiring strict observance of the Mosaic law. Peter had been sent by the apostles to make inquiry, which he did, and was ready to make favorable report, but the representatives of the sect of the Pharisees were determined that Paul and Barnabas should appear before the elders and apostles at Jerusalem and answer the charge of having violated the strict rules of law and tradition, recognized throughout the centuries, in receiving Gentiles into the faith and offering them salvation. Paul admitted the charge, accepted the challenge, and proceeded to the Holy City, to champion his conviction and have determined a vital issue in the cause of Christianity.

VIII

TRIUMPH OF THE DEMOCRACY OF GALILEE

(Acts 15; Galatians 2: 1-10)

"The first tree of Liberty was planted eighteen hundred years ago by God himself on Golgotha. The first tree of Liberty was that cross on which Jesus Christ was offered a sacrifice, for the liberty, equality, and fraternity of the human race."—VICTOR HUGO.

THE issue raised at Antioch was whether the Gentile converts to Christianity should come under the full ceremonial regulations of the Mosaic law. The Pharisees who had embraced Christianity had in no sense abandoned their belief in the Jewish law and did not consider the teachings of Christ as superior to the dogmas of Judaism. They wanted to make Christianity a sect of Judaism in the same manner as the faith of the Pharisees and the belief of the Sadducees. They were greatly disturbed and were unconsciously more Jewish than Christian, and hence they were honestly of the opinion that their ancient faith was at stake, and that these enthusiastic missionaries were sacrificing their sacred heritage, not only as to technical formalities but as to moral precepts. The traditional observances were of such significance to the Jews that it was sacrilege to surrender them. While Paul had condemned neither the law nor the ceremonials, yet he stoutly repudiated the doctrine that their observance was essential to salvation, or that even a perfect observance of the whole law could produce righteousness, which he claimed could only be attained by faith in Christ, expressed in a way of living, in

which his teachings were exemplified. Paul did not suggest that Jewish Christians should give up the ceremonial law, but demanded that the Gentile Christians should not be required to observe it, as a condition precedent to salvation. The Judaizers supported their position with the contention that the Old Testament was the source of their authority; that Christ was circumcised; that he and his apostles respected the law of Moses by observing its ceremonials and paying reverence to the Temple at Jerusalem. They may have made the argument, which was persistently urged at later dates, that Paul had never seen Jesus, that he had no commission to prescribe the Christian doctrines, and indeed that he himself had been circumcised. Paul's conviction was fixed, and he would not yield to any compromise on this question. Thus the situation at Antioch reached an *impasse*, which necessitated an adjournment to Jerusalem, that the controversy might be submitted to the apostles and elders for authoritative decision.

The question to be determined was, the terms upon which Gentiles were to be admitted into the communion of Christian brotherhood. That the issue might be clear and the decision unequivocal, Paul took Titus, a Greek convert, with him, as a representative of Gentile Christianity. The Judaistic partisans demanded that Titus be circumcised. Thus the issue was drawn, in a definite and specified form. Paul first talked privately with the leaders, presumably James, Peter, and John, and explained to them the doctrines which he had preached to the Gentiles and the results of his labors.

The situation was of grave importance to Paul, who wanted definite authority to continue his teaching, to the effect that man is not made upright by doing what the law commands, but through faith in Christ Jesus, exemplified

in a way of living in accordance with that faith. This was, in his opinion, of fundamental and world-wide significance to the spread of the "truth of the gospel."

It was determined to submit the question to a larger group than the apostles and elders, and the Council of the entire Church at Jerusalem was called. After general discussion in zealous fashion, Peter spoke of his experience with the problem of Gentile conversion, having in mind, no doubt, the occasion at Cæsarea when he met Cornelius, to whom he administered Christian baptism. The effect of Peter's address was to silence the multitude and have the Council give audience to Barnabas and Paul, who were ready to debate the essence of Christ's teachings in the light of their convictions and experiences. The argument of the Pharisaic Christians was to the effect that the hope of the Jewish race rested upon recognition of the supremacy of the law, as the very word of God—the divine code of righteousness. Paul had declared everywhere that the salvation of the human race rested upon faith in the life and teachings of Christ, as the revelation of God for the realization of abundant life. His vision reached beyond the boundaries of the Holy Land and comprehended all the peoples of the earth. This was a strange religion to those who had cherished their sacred ceremonials as the special privilege of a "chosen people." They now believed their doctrines to be essential, even to that larger group, who desired to embrace the faith of love, mercy, and service. Paul's purpose was to democratize Christianity and spread the teachings of Jesus to all mankind. He was uncompromising in his opposition to the maintenance of practices that smacked of paganism or resembled idolatry. He believed that the wider liberty of life, as taught by Christ, was fundamental and essential, and indeed so superior to

any plan of salvation theretofore promulgated that it furnished the supreme way of living for all mankind.

James, the brother of Jesus, presided at the Council and closed the debate. He referred to Peter's declaration concerning the Gentiles and then to the prophecies concerning the Messiah, concluding with the recommendation "that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God; but that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15: 19, 20). This suggestion was embraced in a decree from the Council to the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, which concluded with the admonition, "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well" (Acts 15: 28, 29). This has been interpreted to mean, "to renounce the unholy rites of idolatry and worship the one living and true God, practice chastity, and recognize the sanctity of human life." Such interpretation is consistent with Paul's preaching as well as his letters, and is likewise consistent with the fundamentals of Judaism. By some this has been styled as a compromise, but as a matter of fact Paul yielded nothing which he considered vital. The decree was accompanied by a request to remember the poor, which Paul was zealous to do, as it was an essential element of his religion, which he cherished and practiced as long as he lived.

The significant fact of this message to the Gentiles is the omission of the ritualistic mandate championed by the Pharisaic Christians. With this decree the ancient and outworn ceremonials were officially determined as no longer

necessary to salvation, and not required, at least, of Gentiles who embraced Christianity. Distasteful as the order was to the extreme Judaists, it was accepted, with the result that it was a powerful factor in liberalizing the early Church and marked an important epoch in the history of Christianity. What had hitherto been preached by Paul was ratified, and indeed formulated into a definite principle for his future activities in the Gentile mission field. It was the charter of Christian liberty and released the greatest missionary of all time from the hampering influences of narrow ceremonialism. The practical result was a division of the field: Paul went to Gentile lands to preach, without requiring observance of the ceremonials, and the Jerusalem apostles carried the work among the Jews without disturbing their attitude toward the law. James, Peter, and John gave further indorsement by extending to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, to carry their duly authorized message unto the Gentiles. The principle involved in this controversy, though apparently settled, constantly arose in one form or another to annoy Paul throughout his career. In meeting this opposition he was furnished opportunity to emphasize his message, that Christ came to save all mankind from the degrading influences of sin and iniquity. This was the real spirit of the democracy of Galilee, and it has had more influence upon the thoughts and actions of worth-while people than any philosophy of life ever proclaimed.

The decree contained expression of commendation of Paul and Barnabas, and was sent back to Antioch by a special commission, composed of Judas and Silas, two prominent members of the Jerusalem Church. The Gentiles at Antioch rejoiced, but the Jews experienced extreme difficulty in reconciling themselves to the decree.

In order to express his acceptance of the new attitude toward the Gentiles, Peter met them on a basis of social equality, and ate with them at Antioch. This aroused such resentment among the Jews that their protests forced him to discontinue his cordiality. The inconsistency of Peter's activities provoked rebuke from Paul. He would not approve that the decree be recognized in form and repudiated in practice among the Gentiles.

Paul now occupied the lofty vantage ground, which he could consistently maintain, by reason of the decree, that enabled him to preach the teachings of Jesus as the true way of salvation. He was ready to go forward with this program, and the situation seemed to create a new determination in him to Christianize the Greco-Roman world. Inspired by this spirit, to bring every living creature within the scope of the spiritual democracy of Galilee, he suggested to Barnabas that they revisit the places where they had carried the message on the first missionary journey. Barnabas acquiesced, with the suggestion that his cousin, John Mark, accompany them again. Paul had lost confidence in Mark, after he had deserted them in Pamphylia on the first journey.

There was such sharp difference about the matter that Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, and Paul chose Silas, the delegate from Jerusalem, who was a Roman Jew, and well qualified as a colleague on the second campaign, to disarm Jewish prejudice and win Gentile confidence.

IX

AN APPEALING CALL FROM MACEDONIA

(Acts 15: 40, 41; 16; 17: 1-14)

"A talent is perfected in solitude;
A character in the stream of the world."

—GOETHE.

PAUL regarded the mandate issued by the Council at Jerusalem as the Charter of Gentile Christianity, and it stimulated his ambition to transfigure the Roman Empire to a Commonwealth of God. With such purpose and with such authority he was truly the apostle to the Gentiles, which responsibility he met with surpassing zeal. He and Silas followed the land route as they journeyed to Galatia and passed through Syria and Cilicia, visiting Tarsus and the surrounding country which was familiar to both of them.

When they reached Lystra, Paul was so delighted to find that Timothy had remained steadfast in the faith and enjoyed the confidence of the local Church that he ordained him as a colleague and had him join them in the journey. His mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois had embraced Christianity on his first mission to Galatia, which added to his appreciation of the representative of the third generation. He was not dictatorial or arbitrary in carrying out his new program. He circumcised Timothy, in deference to the belief of his mother, who was a devout Jewess, although his father was a Greek. This was fine evidence that Paul was not intolerant of Jewish sentiment for traditional law, even though shortly before he had refused to have Titus circumcised, because he was

a Gentile. At Antioch (in Pisidia) Paul met his old friend Luke, the physician, who advised him against carrying his mission to Asia, on account of climatic conditions which might cause a recurrence of the malaria, from which he had suffered three years before. Luke accompanied them as they wandered into Northwest Asia Minor, as far as Troas, where Paul had the impressive vision of the Macedonian who appealed to him to come to his native land and help his people.

In answer to that call Paul proceeded to Philippi, a town named for Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. It was a Roman colony of historic interest, with a government similar to that of Rome, made so in 42 B.C. by Octavius, afterwards made Emperor, and known in history as Augustus. There is considerable logic in the conclusion reached by some commentators that the man who spoke to Paul in this vision was none other than Luke.

The details of this call, as well as Paul's journey to Philippi and the use of "we" as recounted in the Book of Acts, indicate a familiarity with the geography of the journey as well as the particulars and incidents of the trip that justify the belief that Luke had a large personal interest in the entire situation.

The number of Jews at Philippi was not sufficient to support a synagogue, but they recognized the Jewish Sabbath and met on the riverside for worship. Here Paul preached to Jews and Greeks.

The first convert at this Roman garrison town, and indeed the first Christian convert in Europe, was Lydia, a Jewish proselyte, a business woman of wealth and prominence, who had progressed from the idols of paganism to the ceremonials of the Jewish religion, which she in turn

abandoned under Paul's teaching for the Christian faith, and made her home the meeting place for the missionaries with their converts.

The second person to play an important rôle in their sojourn in Macedonia was a slave girl, who had the gift of ventriloquism and was profitable to her masters through her fortune telling. This girl held steadfastly to the belief, which was general in that community, that ventriloquism was due to superhuman endowment, accompanied with the further divine power of foretelling events. Her apparent intuitions were spoken with such positive candor that she was in great demand as a soothsayer. She became interested in the missionaries and pursued them, proclaiming their divinity, until Paul, with impatient command, ordered her obsessions to cease, and she was converted; whereupon she abandoned fortune telling, to the great financial sacrifice of her owners. These charlatans, chafing under the loss of the lucrative traffic of the slave girl, seized Paul and Silas, dragged them to the public square, and charged them before the magistrates, composing the Roman Court, with disturbing the peace of the town and advocating practices which they, as Romans, could not adopt or observe, because contrary to the law. It was not an opportune time to be accused of such a charge. Infringement of Roman institutions was a serious offense by any one, and the Jews were in disrepute at that time, since they had been recently expelled from the capital by the Emperor, Claudius. When these itinerant Jews were brought before the Roman magistrates, surrounded by a mob of anti-Jewish fanatics, sentence was quickly passed and the lictors were ordered to strip the culprits and scourge them.

While it was contrary to the Roman law to scourge a

Roman, they were not yet aware of the citizenship of these defendants when the mandate was issued in their pretended vindication of justice. It is appropriate here to recall that, a century before, Cicero inaugurated his career as a lawyer in the prosecution of Verres, Proconsul of Sicily, upon the charge that he caused to be scourged at Messina a Roman, who had repeatedly proclaimed, "Civis Romanus sum" ("I am a Roman citizen"). Why Paul did not avail himself of this privilege of Roman citizenship is somewhat of a mystery, for we will have occasion to observe that a few years later such a protest furnished him immediate protection. The whole procedure indicates that the prisoner may not have been given a judicial hearing, such was the fury and prejudice surrounding the situation. Faint and bleeding from the severe punishment, the prisoners were placed in the innermost cell of the dungeon, underground, with fettered hands chained to the wall and feet securely fastened in stocks. Certainly that was sufficient security to satisfy the jailer that the convicts were safe. But about midnight, as Paul and Silas were disturbing the slumbers of their fellow prisoners by their prayers and songs, an earthquake, which was not an infrequent occurrence in that region, shook the jail to its foundation, until the chains which tethered the prisoners fell from the gaping walls and the loosened stocks released their swollen feet. The jailer, realizing that his responsibility, under the law, required that he be substituted for any who escaped and suffer the penalty which had been imposed upon the fugitive, rushed to the jail in despair and was about to thrust his sword into his heart when he heard the voice of Paul shout: "Do thyself no harm. We are all here." This assurance furnished timely relief to the frightened jailer; and after having fastened the other

prisoners securely, he took these dilapidated missionaries to his home, cared for their bleeding wounds, so recently inflicted under his direction, provided them with food, and, with his wife and children, embraced their religious beliefs. The fear that seized the superstitious magistrates caused them, on the following morning, to reverse their ruling, through an order to the lictors to release the prisoners forthwith. But freedom was not the chief concern of Paul and Silas. They proposed to make this an object lesson for the protection of their converts at Philippi and reminded the messenger that they had been scourged publicly and demanded, as Roman citizens, that, with like publicity, they receive their discharge, in the presence and upon the direction of the magistrates. Surprised to learn the citizenship of the prisoners, the order of release was made, as requested, and the consternation that it created alarmed this Roman court with fear of a riot, which was relieved by Paul, Silas, and Timothy taking their departure for Thessalonica, leaving Luke to look after the converts at Philippi. This ancient city in which they took refuge is now Saloniki, and still occupies a strategic position in that territory as evidenced by military reports during the World War.

Thessalonica, named after the daughter of Philip of Macedon, was a free, self-governing democracy, a hundred miles from Philippi. A large number of Jews were there, many of whose wives became converts before the synagogues were closed to the missionaries, and they were driven to establish an organized congregation among the Gentiles. Paul was earning his living by working night and day as a tentmaker. The number of his followers increased so rapidly that the Jews, "being moved with jealousy," appealed to the prejudice of the natives, by predict-

ing the overthrow of the Roman Empire. This created such an uproar that a mob went in search of Paul, Silas, and Timothy. In the meantime Jansen, one of their converts, and their host, was brought before the local court, composed of politarchs, and was charged with having entertained "these upsetters of the whole world." He was placed under bond, to answer for further offenses of his guests. They evaded their pursuers under the cover of night, and went to Berea, fifty miles thence, where they were well received in the synagogue of the Jews, with many converts of both Jews and Gentiles.

Here was apparently a better class of Jews than at Thessalonica and likewise a better class of Greeks, and they became interested in the teachings of the missionaries. The Jewish opposition in Macedonia was confined to the Thessalonians. When they heard of the further success of these strangers, they pursued them, with renewed charges of treason, which aroused such public resentment, especially against Paul, that he was "sent forth by the brethren to go to the coast"—again a fugitive from a furious mob.

X

A FLIGHT FROM FURY INTO ACHAIA

(Acts 17: 15-34; 18)

"Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!

Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!"

—BYRON.

THE population of Achaia was principally in Athens and Corinth, the former a seat of departed learning, the latter a center of waning commerce. The rural sections were but sparsely settled with shepherds and herdsmen. In his flight from the Thessalonian mob, Paul had been accompanied as far as Athens by faithful friends, who returned to Berea with a message to Timothy and Silas, that they should advise the missionary as soon as it was safe for him to return to Thessalonica. His real interest was in his unfinished work in Macedonia, where he would willingly have suffered further punishment in pursuing his mission there, had he not recognized that the temper of the Thessalonian Jews was similar to that inspired and directed by him against Stephen at Jerusalem. The peril was too imminent to justify immediate pursuit of his purpose; yet he cherished the hope that there would be an early change of conditions.

Athens did not have the same prejudice against alien cults as other cities, but rivaled Rome in liberality, in spite of its academic atmosphere and its triumphant idolatry. But this unique city made no appeal to Paul, possibly due to the fact that he was there from necessity and not from choice. He knew something of the Greek master

spirits of past generations, who had made this community preeminent in literature, art, and philosophy, but Roman dominion had stripped it of political power, which subdued its spirit of initiative and reduced its intellectual prestige. It had no distinguished citizen then, but was a decadent city, living on its past glory. To be sure its material splendor, theretofore erected, still surpassed all other communities of the ancient world. The stately Acropolis, crowned by the Parthenon, was surrounded by marvelous temples and public buildings. The agora, or market place, furnished the forum for philosophical discussion, and hence attracted those interested in the study of metaphysics and literature.

The Athenians remained an inquiring people, keen for the new, the curious, the wonderful. The former prestige in art, philosophy, and religion had left the streets lined with temples, shrines, altars, and images, which caught Paul's eye and stirred him with pity and wonder—at the realization of the enormous gravity of pagan dominance. He felt that the beauteous form of these objects of their adoration arrayed falsehood with a keener semblance of truth. Alone, in hostile solitude, "his spirit was stirred within him." He spoke in the synagogue, but the Jews were not influential, hence he devoted his attention to the pagans, who were indolent and indifferent except to something "new." Paul's teaching attracted them after a fashion, and in their arrogance and self-complacency they referred to him with contemptuous epithets. One day he came to an altar bearing the inscription, "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD," which he interpreted as a yearning of the heathen heart for truth—for a living and true God. At least this gave him hope and a greater degree of assurance.

Athens was full of pseudophilosophers, and Paul readily adapted himself to the historic custom of that intellectual city and engaged in the discussion of metaphysical questions in the market place. His new message eventually excited sufficient interest among the professors of the two rival schools of Greek philosophy—the Epicurean and the Stoic—that they forgot their common jealousy, for the time being, and brought him before the ancient and august Greek court, called the Council of the Areopagus, and demanded an explanation of the “strange divinities” which he preached. This was similar to the charge brought against Socrates four centuries before, upon which he was tried and condemned to death; hence there was a sensitive tradition among the Greeks on this subject. When Paul was arraigned before the Council of the Areopagus, whether upon actual trial or for preliminary investigation, Solon’s constitution was the law, and the philosophers of Athens sat in judgment. Triumphant idolatry challenged his spirit in the presence of the judges of this celebrated court and the crowd of assembled spectators. His defense, of which a fragment is given us by Luke—usually referred to as his “Oration on Mars’ Hill”—is adroit and diplomatic. He spoke of their religious institutions, and the altar bearing the inscription, “TO AN UNKNOWN GOD,” as an avenue of approach to the discussion of the God who does not dwell in sanctuaries made with hands. “What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you,” was his announcement as he sought to avoid a clash with them. He did not directly deny the pagan idea, but attempted to use it to exemplify the God who made the world and everything that is in it. He recalled that their poets had referred to human beings as the offspring of their Divinity, and said, “Forasmuch then as we are the

offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device."

To this argument they listened; but when he proclaimed the resurrection of Christ, the Greeks failed to follow him. Some treated him with scorn, others said they would hear him another day. His converts for the time being were few—among them a woman named Damaris or Damalis, and a member of the Council of the Areopagus, named Dionysius. Yet in later years the Athenian Church became, for a time, an outstanding figure in Christian influence. The theory has been advanced that Paul regarded his speech before the Council of the Areopagus as a mistake, in that it appealed more to man's wisdom than God's power, and for that reason he left Athens and went to Corinth.

Corinth had been rebuilt by Julius Cæsar in an effort to rehabilitate its commerce, which was yet sufficient to make it the leading industrial city of Greece, with many Romans and Jews as well as Greeks. Paul preached with much greater success at Corinth than in Athens, and won both Jews and Gentiles to his faith; but a breach with the Jewish synagogue necessitated the establishment of a Church, wholly Gentile. His necessities made him friends, for his lack of funds forced him to take up his trade, at which he met the Jewish tentmaker Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who had been driven from Rome under the edict of expulsion of the Jews, issued by Emperor Claudius. This was the beginning of a close friendship, which lasted for a long time.

Paul had no keener interest in Corinth than in Athens and still yearned to return to Macedonia, until Silas and Timothy finally came, with a message of greeting and a

timely contribution. This was helpful to their hero, whose purse was much depleted, although his interest had not abated. The excitement had not sufficiently subsided to warrant Paul's return to Macedonia, so he dictated to Timothy a tactful and encouraging message to his converts there, which is the earliest of his letters that has come down to us. After he had sent Timothy to deliver this "First Letter to the Thessalonians," he pursued his evangelistic work in Corinth with great zeal, with the result that the Corinthian Jews became inflamed. They arrested him while preaching in the market place. He was charged with "persuading the people to worship God contrary to the law." Gallio, brother to Seneca, the statesman and philosopher, was the presiding judge of the proconsul's court, and when the testimony had all been presented against the prisoner, he sustained a demurrer to the evidence, as we would term it to-day, and released the defendant on the ground that the facts presented were insufficient to make a case against him, under the Roman law. This setback to his persecutors enabled him to continue his ministry in Corinth for another six months (making his whole stay a year and a half) before he finished his second missionary journey and started back to Jerusalem. While at Corinth he wrote his "Second Letter to the Thessalonians."

Aquila and Priscilla accompanied him, on his return, as far as Ephesus, where they remained. After a brief stay, Paul left the capital of Asia Minor, much interested—promised to return—sailed to Cæsarea, and from there he journeyed to the Holy City. Little is known of what happened at Jerusalem, but about this time his letter to the Galatians was written—just where is not known.

We should consider these letters, written to the churches which Paul had established, before taking up his further

journey, as they reflect an attitude of consecrated devotion, and reveal his adaptiveness to varied conditions of communities, widely different in their conceptions of the principles which he had proclaimed. His early contacts had been with Greek traditions, and as he later crossed varied currents of civilization the horizon of his view of life was broadened into as comprehensive a conception of human nature as has ever been revealed to a human being. He became keener than ever in his missionary purpose and felt a more impelling urge to enlarge his field. But he believed that the places he had visited were not sufficiently grounded in the beliefs he had taught to withstand permanently the persistent forces of paganism and Judaism, hence he sought to strengthen their faith through written admonition, that they might read and reflect. His letters constitute the most practical application extant of the teachings of Christ to the daily problems of life. Consideration of them is necessary and should be both entertaining and illuminating.

.

XI

PROVE ALL THINGS: HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD

(1 Thessalonians)

"Let me hear from thee by letters."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE art of letter-writing is a rare accomplishment. Such method of communication has long been effectively employed to make concrete application of abstract truth. It requires as high order of ability to make concise, accurate, and intelligent statements in a letter as in any other form of expression, and it is equally as essential. The merits of a letter are measured by the immediate reaction to its appeal. The intimate personal element involved necessarily emphasizes the supreme importance of sincerity in this form of interchange of thought. Personality is so much reflected in correspondence that Schopenhauer declares that more accurate conception of the character of a man can be obtained by reading one of his letters than from a personal interview.

Paul evidently wrote other letters than those found in the New Testament, but these contain such fundamental elements of effective correspondence that they have caused him to be universally recognized as the greatest letter writer in history. He wrote from various places to varied peoples, with earnest purpose to create an enlightened religious conviction and to fortify his converts against constantly-renewed opposition.

The object of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians was to encourage each individual to remain steadfast, to strength-

en his weak and wavering brother, and to meet his personal responsibility. This communication was to be read to all his converts, to give them assurance that the Apostle was with them in spirit, in all their "affliction and distress." He was greatly encouraged by the substantial number who accepted the gospel at Thessalonica and the enthusiasm of their response, yet his untimely departure, under such hostile influences, caused him great anxiety. He realized that the persecution of the Jews as well as the scorn and ridicule of the pagans put his converts to severe test. This hostility was stimulated by the sensation, created throughout that part of Macedonia by the activity of these new professors of Christianity. While this was gratifying, Paul realized that the fruits of his labor had not matured, since he had not been able to train and establish his followers in the way of living taught by Jesus Christ. His appeal was to "perfect that which was lacking in their faith."

At that time Greece was divided into two parts, Macedonia and Achaia. His heart was in Macedonia. His sojourn in Athens had been disappointing and his experience at Corinth discouraging; hence his genuine relief when Timothy came, bringing favorable report and personal messages from his Thessalonian friends. This confirmed his confidence in Thessalonica as a fertile field for missionary labors, despite prevalent evils which were threatening and difficult to overcome. The vices of impurity and lust, the pernicious processes of dissensions and divisions, the disrespect and disregard of the authorized leaders, supplemented the subtle influences of paganism and Judaism, to create a condition that gave Paul great concern and impelled him to write this personal appeal to his converts in which he urged them to "abstain from all

appearance of evil." The situation was delicate and difficult, since this new faith was not supported by the sentiment of tradition, but was an innovation with these people. Their new religion had not yet permeated their lives, or it might be more aptly said that their lives were not saturated with their religion, even though they cherished it as a genuine conviction. It was being subjected to severe trial by the subtle sneer of bigotry and the cynical censure of fanaticism. A letter sent to meet such a situation must needs face the analysis of varied criticism and cold logic, for it was to be subjected to the interpretation of ritualistic Jew and pagan Gentile. It was against such formidable opposition that he sought to fortify them, with the admonition that "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

Paul's experience had developed in him a high degree of diplomacy, which necessarily meant that he was neither selfish nor self-centered, and that he was capable of measuring his words from the viewpoint of those who were to receive and interpret them. The influence of his missionary work had also freed him from the bluntness of dogmatism. It cannot be charged that Paul's attitude or the manner of his activities at Thessalonica was the cause of the mob violence that necessitated his departure from that vicinity. The results indicate that he presented his message in an attractive and convincing way. He was genuinely concerned with his work and intensely interested in the people with whom he labored. Fully realizing the difficulties which beset him, the tone of his letter is deferential and diplomatic. He reiterated his work of faith and labor of love in his expressions of general appreciation and personal gratitude for the fidelity of those who had been

steadfast. The method of approach meant the gaining of confidence without any resort to flattery or any illusive gesture. His manner and motive were clean and uplifting, and neither his attitude nor his appeal was pedantic; but they were personal and intimate. He manifested no spirit of superiority in himself, but he made God supreme and used no unnecessary language in arriving at the chief object of his message. "We speak not to please men, but to please God, who tests our hearts." Consistent with his teaching, his manner was as gentle as a mother and as considerate as a father toward their own children, beseeching them, encouraging them, and charging them to pursue "the work of faith and labor of love" that they might share "the joy of the Holy Ghost." He cheered their bravery under persecution, while expressing lamentable disappointment at being separated from them. He was intensely eager to see them, "but Satan hindered." This was the construction he placed upon the bond which the politarchs at Thessalonica required of his disciple and host, Jason, and others, under the charge of the mob, that they had received these missionaries, "who had made trouble all over the world." The spirit shown by the severe conditions of the bond clearly indicated that Paul's return to Macedonia would not only have been at the peril of his own life, but would certainly have provoked dangerous hostility and possibly violence toward his converts.

So intimate and earnest were his words that there can be little doubt that what he wrote in this letter was what he would have said if he had talked to them in person. The communication in this form was more persuasive and gave them better opportunity to reflect and study the import of his message. Most of them had, until recently, been pagans and were not thoroughly attuned to the social

and moral obligations of the Christian. While they were trying to lead the life which Paul wanted them to live, which he fully realized, yet he was anxious for them "to excel in it still more." He rejoiced that they had "turned from idols to serve the living and true God," and he definitely declared the will of God with relation to daily conduct, urging that a strong and pure heart in the sight of God must abound in love for one another and for all mankind. This was the practice he preached throughout his missionary work, and he exemplified it in his Christian life as few, if any, in history have done.

This letter was written at Corinth, amid an environment that was a constant reminder of moral laxity, and naturally this stubborn subject loomed large in his thinking, for his precepts in this message constantly refer to a more lofty standard of social morality. He declares absolute fidelity to the marriage relation, as God's will, which requires a pure and honorable relationship, not made as an excuse for gratifying the sensual passions, but as a divine ordinance. "For God did not call us to an unclean but to a pure life. Therefore he who disregards this, disregards not man but the God who gave you his holy Spirit."

The message which Timothy brought to Paul from the Thessalonians evidently made inquiry concerning the second coming of Christ. This uncertain event caused much unrest among them, first because of their perplexity as to those who may have died before that time, and secondly as to how soon that appearance would be. Paul replied in his letter that those who had died in the faith God will bring with him. As to the time of the second coming he writes that they "know perfectly that the day of the Lord is to come like a thief in the night." It is quite evident that the spirit prompting Paul in writing this letter was

that of loving anxiety for a people in whom he had great hope and intense interest, but for whom he felt very considerable apprehension. He was impressed with their faithfulness, but realized their spiritual immaturity and the dangers of persecution and ridicule which surrounded them; hence his urge for coöperation, patience, and brotherly love, that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord."

His words of encouragement and his appeal for vigilance and the maintenance of discipline express his philosophy of life and reflect his deep religious endowment. The spirit of optimism was conspicuous in this crisis and rang true to his enthusiastic appeals. "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." There were two striking sentences in this letter that reflected his personal interest and anxiety for the Thessalonians and his confidence in the message he had preached to them. The first was when he expressed his appreciation of their fidelity and love, as an inspiration to him, by declaring, "For now I can really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord." Again, when he made manifest his supreme faith in the way of living which he had preached, by suggesting that it be subjected to the test. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

XII

BE NOT WEARY IN WELL DOING

(2 Thessalonians)

"Work is the inevitable condition of human life, the true source of human welfare."—TOLSTOI.

PAUL's second letter to the Thessalonians rejoiced in their growing faith and increasing love for one another. In his first letter he importuned them to remain steadfast in the "work of faith and labor of love." It was genuinely encouraging to him that they had withstood the opposition, and especially comforting because he realized they were "growing in faith and abounding in charity," in successfully cooperating to encounter the difficulties arising through the continued "persecutions and tribulations" which they had to endure. Hence he delighted to pronounce their steadfastness as "worthy of the kingdom of God." While there is similarity in the substance of these two letters to the Church at Thessalonica, a distinction has been suggested, that the first letter is adapted to the Greek Christians and the second to the Jewish converts. Possibly the Greeks were the more given to licentiousness, and the Jews were the more lethargic, yet the rare prudence of his speech does not make it appear that he intended anything he said to be personally applicable to the Jews as distinguished from the Gentiles. It is a fair observation that the gravamen of his first letter was against impurity, while in the second he condemned indolence. There was a feeling among the Jewish Christians that the Messiah's work would not be finished until he had established an

earthly kingdom. To be sure, there was no such tradition among the pagan Greeks. This necessitated the idea, with the Jews, of the second coming of Christ, which Paul had proclaimed, with such emphasis as to produce greater immediate significance than he had intended. The Jewish converts were so obsessed with the idea that the second coming was near at hand that many of them abandoned their means of livelihood and were living on charity. Paul especially directed his effort to correct this erroneous impression as to the nearness of this event, but in so doing he did not depart from the traditional idea among the Jews of the setting for the Messianic kingdom. Certain conditions were supposed to precede the second coming, which involved the archenemy of God—the Son of Perdition—making his appearance and meeting annihilation at the hands of the Messiah. While Paul doubtless entertained belief in the Messianic kingdom, he had not intended to emphasize it as an event shortly to happen; but he had said so much that it was now a difficult task to arrest the feverish fanaticism, which was magnifying this idea in such a way as to threaten the Thessalonians with widespread idleness. After calling attention to the fact that the conditions which were to precede the advent of the Messiah did not obtain, he met the real threatening issue by imperative admonition as to individual industry. He adroitly linked this with his personal experiences at Thessalonica, by recalling the example he had set, in working night and day, that he might not be a burden upon any of them. He reiterated the rule, which he had already announced, “If anyone will not work, give him nothing to eat.” More specifically he declared, “We hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now with the authority of the Lord Jesus

Christ we charge and exhort such people to keep quiet and do their work and earn their own living." This emphatic and authoritative declaration left no possible justification for further idleness.

His economic dictum with reference to work is perfectly consistent with the teaching of Christ, who, when he was persecuted by the Jews who sought to slay him, because he healed the impotent man on the Sabbath, replied, "My father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John 5: 17). When he healed the blind man at the pool of Siloam, he declared, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9: 4). Industry is fundamental in Christianity. Idleness and indifference are inimical to every precept and practice of Jesus of Nazareth. The fact that the industrial leadership of the world to-day is with Christian nations is evidence that "the work of faith with power," which Paul emphasized to the Thessalonians, is in harmony with the finest economic progress.

In his first letter, Paul directed the Thessalonians to work with their hands, so that they might enjoy the respect of the outsiders, and not be dependent upon anybody. There is no greater example of tireless industry in history than this itinerant missionary. In his letters to the Corinthians, written years later, he glorified work, as also in his Epistle to the Ephesians, specifying "work with our own hands." His habits were consistent with his teaching. Without boasting, yet without apology, he told the elders of the Church at Ephesus "that these hands have administered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me" (Acts 20: 34). At the time he wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians he was earning his living at tent-making with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth.

His letters are concerned with personal counsel of practical affairs, with human happiness and well-being. In this way he was striving for stability of character. He had a clear conception of the way to get the most out of life. He sought to show his converts how to find a more happy and complete life here on earth, which they might enjoy with a keener sense of life values, in maintaining higher standards in their way of living. This reveals the sort of practical instruction he was urging, in order to change the conditions at Thessalonica. However, his approach was not through appeal for an earthly kingdom, but his supreme purpose was to control the passions and reform the habits of men in that part of the world who were in grave need of such change, and seemed ready to yield to the influences to bring it about. He was encouraged to believe that a fine opportunity was offered to promote those influences which tend to lead people to higher ideals and to stimulate the search for a better and a larger conception of God. Paul felt that he had laid the foundation for a worth-while Church at Thessalonica, with possibilities of great development, because it was a commercial city of importance and the capital of Macedonia. It lay at the foot of Mount Olympus, the holy mountain of Greek mythology. He was ambitious to shatter the sin and superstition of this stronghold of paganism with the power of the gospel of Christ. He had perhaps observed a wider range of activities there than at any place he had been, and while the opposition was stubborn, and the charge of treason that had been preferred against him was serious, he felt the field was so promising that he longed to return. The shocking influence of superstition that had flourished for centuries in that vicinity aroused the missionary to a degree of earnestness that he had not theretofore experienced. He keenly ap-

preciated the call to Macedonia, and he did not propose to forsake the work, nor to overlook any influences preying upon the weakness of his followers—not even busybodies, who naturally were active and effective with people living in idleness. It is significant that he invoked the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in his charge that they should “keep quiet, do their work, and earn their own living.” It shows the emphasis he meant to give to his reproof. His rebuke was intended to be severe. He proposed to mark the idler and the busybody, and to ostracize each from society—to make him feel ashamed. He made a sound economic principle the foundation of his social philosophy. Deeper knowledge from longer experience has demonstrated the wisdom of his teaching. But his admonition was tempered with mercy. “Do not regard him as an enemy; caution him as a brother.”

In this direct personal appeal Paul made the most practical application of a profound principle of social economics. He was dealing with difficult problems and diligent opponents, but he met fearlessly the forces that threatened his work.

First of all he sought harmony among his converts, and insisted on love as the first of Christian virtues. The practical appeal was for mutual service and helpfulness. His ethical and social teachings in these letters emphasized the relations of Christians with each other, which was the difficult practice to establish—and still is. Most of the trouble in the world comes from the failure of people to get along together—sometimes through ignorance, but more often through its kindred spirit of jealousy and selfishness. Realizing that Christianity is a religion for all mankind, regulating the attitude and activities of individuals toward each other, Paul felt that the principles of Jesus could be

applied in practical daily life to every people on earth, and his experience was strengthening this conviction. He made clear that religion was personal, and that righteousness was an individual attainment that must be subjected to social and economic tests by reason of the necessities encountered in directing a way of living. The vital question with Paul was, how religion might regulate daily conduct so as to realize the maximum joy in life. He well realized that the people of Macedonia were in danger, by reason of the well-intrenched influences that were operating to intimidate, to persecute, and to sneer at them. But he felt that tolerance and sympathy were making substantial progress. He was a courageous optimist, eager to maintain whatever ground he had gained. All through his missionary experiences he was constantly sounding a rallying call for perseverance and steadfastness. In reiteration of his former slogans he declared to the Thessalonians that they "Stand firm," "Hold fast," "Be not weary in well doing." These injunctions have rung through the centuries, and the same spirit in slightly modified parlance calls out to-day to "Carry on!"

.

XIII

THE FOLLY OF THE GALATIANS

(Letter to the Galatians)

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"—GALATIANS 3: 1.

AFTER Paul had spent three years on his second mission, evangelizing Macedonia and Achaia, he felt an urgent impulse to visit Jerusalem. When he was about to leave on his return voyage, he was stricken by a malady at the seaport, near Corinth, where he was attended by one of his converts, the deaconess Phœbe, who contributed substantial support in establishing a local church.

Aquila and Priscilla accompanied Paul as far as Ephesus, where he left them to engage at their craft in a new field, while he proceeded to Cæsarea, and from there to Jerusalem. Nothing of definite importance is recorded of his visit there. But when he returned to Antioch—the starting point of his second mission—he met Timothy, who had left him *en route* at Ephesus, to make a survey of conditions in Galatia. The report was discouraging; but if Paul was depressed, it was only temporary, for his ultimate reaction was a dynamic rebound.

The opposition over which he had triumphed in the Council at Jerusalem had not acquiesced, nor abandoned the advocacy of their ceremonial ordinances. They followed him into Galatia and succeeded in exciting widespread dissension. While professing Christianity, they demanded of Paul's converts full recognition of the traditional observances of Jewish ceremonies, in defiance of the

message of the Council which the missionary had delivered to them. In subtle fashion they charged that Paul (a) had been guilty of gross inconsistency in recognizing the Mosaic law in circumcising Timothy, after the decree, which he so earnestly sought, had been issued at Jerusalem, (b) that his gospel of justification by faith apart from the works of the law was a fallacy, and (c) that he was not an authorized apostle, but was guilty of usurping authority, which he had not been commissioned to exercise; hence his doctrine was neither authentic nor trustworthy. All this created a disturbing, and indeed threatening, situation. Paul was not only greatly concerned, but was deeply distressed, because he could not go directly in person and disabuse their minds of the erroneous propaganda. His only appeal was through a written message, which has come down to us in the form of his "Epistle to the Galatians."

The spirit of this letter was vastly different from that shown in his epistles to the Thessalonians. The situation required a more militant attitude. He met the attacks of his accusers in direct, sharp, and fearless argument, based upon experiences which were indisputable. His resentment and impatience, that these people should be influenced to doubt the gospel he had preached to them, aroused vigorous censure. He preceded his formal greeting with a declaration of his apostleship, formally challenging their attack, and took the lofty attitude that his commission was by the direct revelation of Jesus Christ. That was his interpretation of his experience when he was halted in such an extraordinary manner on the road to Damascus.

Righteous indignation dictated the indictment of desertion by the Galatians, which he follows by a protest against the disturbing propaganda of the Judaists, who were de-

siring to "pervert the gospel of Christ." With positive utterance and with perfect confidence, he reiterates his faith in Jesus Christ, and with vehement invective he invokes a curse upon any one, even "an angel from heaven," who offers a different gospel to that he had preached. He met the charge against the diplomacy of his approach and appeal, which they had characterized as pleasing to men rather than to God, by reminding them that if he had been seeking present personal popularity he would not have become the servant of Christ. They had only to recall his experience in Galatia to appreciate this argument.

He declared that through divine revelation his way of living had been revolutionized—from persecuting and devastating the Church of God, in his fanatical zeal for the traditions of his forefathers, to the preaching to the Gentiles the same gospel he had sought to destroy. He reminded them that this revelation was not through communications "with flesh and blood," nor indeed with the men at Jerusalem, who were apostles before him; but that it was direct and personal, communicated on the broad highway to Damascus, and confirmed by intimate communion with God upon the plains and hills of Arabia. He based his argument upon the facts of personal experience and made no false pretense as to his relation with the apostles at Jerusalem, before the years spent in proclaiming the gospel in Syria-Cilicia. He stated plainly that he was at that time personally unknown to the Christian Churches in Judea, except through the reports carried to them, that "the man who once persecuted us is now preaching the gospel of the faith he tried to destroy."

Pressing his personal experience, he tells them that, in obedience to a revelation, fourteen years later he went back to Jerusalem, accompanied by Barnabas and Titus, and

reported the spread of the gospel which he had proclaimed among the Gentiles, with the result that the conference granted definite authority to him and Barnabas to continue to preach that same gospel in the name of the Church, and to carry the message to the Gentiles, without requiring that they observe the traditional ceremonials. This authority was signified by the right-hand-of-fellowship, extended to Paul and Barnabas by James, Peter, and John, which was actual acknowledgment of their divine call to preach the gospel among the Gentiles, just as they had been doing.

The reciprocal obligation of Paul and Barnabas, and the only one required of them, was that they should remember the poor, which indeed they were zealous to do. He assured them that, before these apostles to the Gentiles had started on their new mission, this same vexing question was renewed at Antioch, where Paul spoke such plain words to Peter, that no question could be raised as to his purpose to exercise his authority, to "keep to the straight path of the truth of the gospel"; which gospel he was to carry to the Gentiles, unencumbered with Jewish ceremonials, and Peter was to preach to the Jews, with the option to continue the ceremonial rites.

Paul here carries personal relationship to a wider field of operation, and lays down the doctrine which added so much to his fame and power—"Justification by faith attested by experience." The first mention of his famous doctrine was in this letter to the Galatians, although it is more exhaustively elaborated in the argument found in his letter to the Romans. Henceforth we shall observe how consistently and persistently he makes faith the foundation of his religion.

Thus he marshaled undisputed facts of his own experi-

ence in such fashion as to prove the authority of his apostleship, and at the same time he showed that his commission authorized the practice he had pursued with reference to the omission of the observance of the ceremonial law, then so defiantly urged among them by the Judaists. He was only concerned in omitting this observance by the Gentiles. But he met the issue in direct challenge, and declared that mere observance of ceremonials is insufficient to overcome the tyranny of sin, which constantly besets the individual. Thus he relates religion with personal daily experience, in his contention that life cannot resist sin by a system of rules. It must be overcome through a dominant conviction that directs all activities in accordance with the controlling purposes and objectives in their daily program of life. That conviction is founded upon faith in Jesus Christ, whose way of living worked righteousness, not through fear of the law, but by reason of the satisfaction and mental comfort that come from conduct based upon such conviction.

We should probably enlarge a bit upon this conviction that we are considering in connection with the most involved doctrine of all Paul's teachings—Justification by Faith. To live by law does not necessarily require a love of law, or even respect for it; indeed such life may be governed exclusively through fear. We do not know how many people try to do right because of the fear of the consequences of wrongdoing, but it is plain that Paul did not account it righteous living to do right solely "on the score of the works of the law." There must be something more than fear, or restraint, or scant respect, to prompt a life that is to be genuinely upright. A truly religious way of living should be voluntary, gracious—aye, joyous—to measure up to Paul's standard of righteousness. Right

conduct should result from choice, not fear; from preference, not restraint; from conviction, not conventionality. The desire for such life must be woven into the warp and woof of impulse, purpose, and ambition, and be so dominant that it produces delight in the daily experience of him who is governed by its directing influence. That is what constitutes conviction, and that is what Paul meant when he said, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me. The life I am now living in the body I am living by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I refuse to nullify the mercy of God. For if uprightness could be secured through law, then Christ died for naught."

What superlative courage was displayed by the apostle in this expression of confidence in his conviction. He followed through with the same imperative swing that he began the argument. He proved the folly of the Galatians by asking them if they received the Spirit through doing what the law commands or through believing the message he had brought them. His militant spirit is revealed in the masterful declarations of independence and authority. There was no anticlimax and no reservation in his utterances concerning his gospel of faith, which he declared as the only source of righteousness, and the only power to direct a consistent way of living. Faith, with Paul, was complete and perfect belief in Christ, attended with that peremptory conviction that makes the spirit of Christ supreme in all the operations of the mind, driving out envy and hate with genuine love and mercy.

XIV

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

(Letter to the Galatians)

"Brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."—GALATIANS 5: 13.

THE letter to the Galatians was intended as a message of salvation, not only from the power of sin in that community, but from the guilt of sin in each individual. Paul meant to teach the doctrine of justification by faith, apart from the works of the law, as the only pathway to righteousness, which is that state of mind where the dominant motive and desire is first to think right, and then to act accordingly. The Judaists regarded the law as divine, hence their reverence for its sanctity and their purpose to preserve its prerogatives. Paul's message was that the days of "righteousness by the law" were past, and that there had been evolved a more rational way of living, based upon an enlightened conscience, responsive to a holy impulse for a pure mind and an upright spirit. He declared that the gospel of faith was sound in reason and fundamental in experience, that it was not a discovery but a development, revealed through experience and consummated in Jesus Christ. He reminded them that Abraham had faith in God, and "it was accounted to him for righteousness." The Old Testament Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the heathen through faith, and thus the gospel was declared to Abraham that "in thee shall all nations be blessed."

He recalls the covenant between God and Abraham, the initial condition of which was faith, upon which the promise of salvation was made to Abraham "and to his seed." This promise cannot be annulled or canceled by the law, which was not declared until more than four hundred years after God had ratified the promise; but rather now was this promise fulfilled in Christ. He was not condemning the law, but likened it to an attendant, leading on to Christ, that all might be made upright through faith. In the revelation of Christ all are sons of God, through faith, under the promise of God—especially the true descendants of Abraham. This was a diplomatic appeal to the Jews, founded upon accepted facts of their own history.

But many of the Galatians had been pagans, and it was all the more difficult for Paul to be reconciled to their return to similar bondage, in which light, in a measure, he viewed the law. He mollified his somewhat severe rebuke when he recalled their generous welcome to him and charged the responsibility for their change to the Judaists, whose attitude he warned against, because it was selfish and inconsistent. They charged him with admitting that circumcision was necessary and condemned him for eliminating it through salvation by faith in Christ. Having made his position perfectly clear as to this ceremonial, he lost patience with the attitude his adversaries had assumed and uses the only coarse suggestion in all his writings. "I would that they who unsettle you would even go beyond circumcision."

He links faith with freedom and admonishes them to live by the Spirit, that they may help one another. Paul did not leave the question in such shape that any could consistently charge that he preached that faith alone guaranteed salvation. To believe was essential, but not suffi-

cient by itself. It naturally led to faithful service under definite principles for daily conduct. The motive that impels action tests the character of every individual activity. This was the lesson which he sought to impress upon them, with the injunction for intelligent plan, directed by sincere purpose.

Realizing the moral degeneracy of the influences surrounding them, Paul charges the Galatians that they exercise self-restraint in all their actions, and to subdue their animosities. Freedom did not mean physical license or selfish liberty, but involves unselfish service. Likewise a self-centered attitude was to be overcome. Many people are disposed to be considerate of others if it occurs to them to do so, but they are so absorbed in their own welfare that they become oblivious to the convenience or happiness or even the rights of others. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

He recognized that human nature in its comprehensive existence involves two domains, and he contrasts the "works of the flesh" with the "fruit of the Spirit." The vices of the flesh are catalogued as adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like, which stand in the way of inheriting the kingdom of God. Against this he contrasts the fruits of the Spirit, as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law. It is not only necessary to cast the vicious and degrading influences out of our minds, but we should embrace and embody the holy elements in every impulse and activity of our lives. With this survey before them, he makes direct

and practical application. "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit." How much the world still needs to observe this exhortation, even as in those ancient days, because of the beguiling influence of vanity and envy, to which Paul makes specific references.

Vanity challenges and envy criticizes, and both lead to an unhappy and dangerous attitude, which often causes the unfortunate victim to mislead himself. "For if any one thinks he is somebody when he really is nobody, he deceiveth himself." Is it not a fact that people who think they are misleading others more often deceive themselves? The most dangerous position a person can drift into is to compare himself favorably with others, rather than test his work and worth, and measure his accomplishments, in the light of his own endowments, and thus realize his failure to measure up to his possibilities. In the judgment of those with whom we daily associate, as well as in the final judgment, every one must bear the consequences of his own thoughts as reflected in his own acts. Responsibility is personal, that is, individual. Paul made this clear in his appeal (a) for mercy among men, (b) for humility in the individual, (c) for searching the conscience of self, (d) for constant loyalty to the guidance of the Spirit, as constituting the first lessons in the law of life. With him, liberty is a synonym for responsibility and an antonym of license. Christian liberty is the finest influence that has ever operated among men. It embraces that higher spiritual law which Paul sought to substitute for the old ceremonial law of the Jews. It was given not to create a new Jewish sect, but to establish a new world-order for mankind.

The message to the Galatians was written with daring courage, in defiance of sacred traditions of those among

whom Paul lived, and by whom he had been educated, and with whom he had persecuted people, who had professed the same faith he now so eloquently proclaimed, and for which he made such matchless appeal. He was defying the hatred of those among whom he had been trained as a Hebrew and a Pharisee.

This letter had wholesome effect upon the Galatians. Its purpose was to warn his converts of the bondage of the Mosaic law. It proclaims Christian liberty with a protest against religious provincialism and shows the result of profound reflection and ripened decision. Paul had thought through the problems of life and was convinced that the Spirit of Christ stood for religious liberty. His outlook was world-wide, and his tireless zeal was stimulated by a superb spirit of individual freedom through faith in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

He points out the three ways of living, (a) by the law, (b) by the flesh, and (c) by the spirit, after having given full credit to the law, with no misunderstanding as to its relevant importance. With powerful yet lofty speech, he compares the flesh with the spirit: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Each of the soils of perishing flesh and immortal spirit yields a harvest corresponding with its nature. The harvest of the flesh is fragile and perishes. The Spirit is immortal and its harvest is eternal life.

XV

ENCOUNTER WITH THE PAGANISM OF EPHESUS

(Acts 19)

"All the inhabitants of Asia, Jews as well as Greeks, heard the word of the Lord. . . . Thus did the word of the Lord increase and prevail mightily."—Acts 19: 10, 20.

AFTER writing to the Galatians, Paul, with impatient haste, departed to visit the churches which he had established at Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, and was relieved to find that his letter had restored their confidence. With this reassurance he seemed equally as impatient to continue to Ephesus, where his interest was kindled during his short stay on his return from his second mission. Ephesus was the leading city of Asia Minor—a trade center of importance, by reason of the extent of the territory to which it was tributary and the commerce it drew from the Mediterranean. Paul recognized Ephesus as not only an inviting field for the spread of Christianity, but as a strategic position from which to conduct his various mission operations, and especially as an advantageous point from which to send contributions to the Church at Jerusalem, because of the protection available in transmitting them.

The pagan religion of the Ephesians originated in a meteorite, which had attracted their worship, because it fell from heaven. Their imaginative processes developed this divinity to the goddess Artemis, and later Diana, with multiple breasts, tipifying the mother of human beings as well as beasts. Her cult was the established Church of

Ephesus. A magnificent temple had been erected to this goddess, the generous proportions of which, combined with the splendor of its architecture, caused it to be ranked as one of the wonders of the ancient world. That this deity was of long standing is evidenced by the fact that the temple of Artemis was over two hundred years in construction. The walls were marble, with interior finish of ivory, cypress, and cedar. It was surrounded by one hundred and twenty-seven columns, sixty feet in height—each erected to a king. In addition to being a place of worship, it was a museum of rare and rich treasures, the chief of which was an image to this goddess, in whose honor solemn festivals were held, attended by multitudes of worshipers from all parts of Asia Minor.

For the further edification of such visitors, the Ephesians had erected an unusual theater in the curve of the mountain, which formed a natural amphitheater, with seating capacity for twenty-five thousand people. A unique public library, of respectable proportions, met the intellectual demands of the people, and some of its stone shelves are still intact. Silver miniatures of the temple and statues of the goddess were manufactured of terra cotta, marble, or silver, and sold as memorials. This constituted the principal industry and embodied the pride and spirit of the city. The silversmiths engaged in this manufacture comprised an influential guild, which was one of the early labor unions of history.

This religious situation furnished a somewhat different condition to any that Paul had encountered. In addition to the pagan worship of the idolized goddess, the Ephesians were madly devoted to the mysteries of magic, which was the basis of the literature of their extraordinary library. However, Paul early found certain disciples who

had accepted the doctrines of John the Baptist, through the preaching of Apollos—an Alexandrian Jew of polished eloquence and power—who had departed for Corinth before the Apostle's arrival at Ephesus.

Paul's first purpose was to locate Aquila and Priscilla, who had accompanied him there from Corinth on the return from his second mission. He soon joined them in their common craft of tent-making, and preached to the Jews on the Sabbath in their synagogues, which hospitality was soon withdrawn, and he organized a separate congregation and preached in the building operated as a school and gymnasium by Tyrannus. The classes in the school were only held in the morning (during which time Paul was weaving tents with Aquila), leaving the building available for preaching during the afternoon. Paul had made inquiry of the disciples of John (twelve in number), whom he met soon after his arrival at Ephesus, concerning their baptism. When he found that they had only received baptism of repentance as taught by John the Baptist, and possibly administered to them by Apollos, he told them of Christ Jesus, whom John had predicted, and they were again baptized and became a helpful influence in Paul's work. Shortly after he began his work at Ephesus, a committee of Greeks presented him a letter from the converts at Corinth, containing inquiry as well as disquieting information concerning the Church there.

The answer to this communication is Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians, which was written about A.D. 55.

He made no open attack on the divinities of the Ephesians; but during his more than two years' sojourn in the Asiatic capital he preached regularly and frequently made the observation that Deity is not "like gold or silver carved with the art and device of man," and that "there are no

gods that are made with hands." These remarks gradually made impression, and the sale of the images diminished, until Demetrius, leader of the guild of silversmiths, appealed to his craftsmen to defend their industry and protect the prestige of the temple of the great goddess Diana as an object of worship. His purpose was to cause an uprising, which would result in the expulsion of Paul and his followers from the city. The Ephesians were a volatile people and easily excited. While this speech of Demetrius was made at their guild rendezvous, crowds gathered in the streets and moved toward the theater. They overtook two Macedonian Greeks, Aristarchus and Gaius, who were recognized as followers of Paul and were seized and carried to the theater, presumably to entice Paul to come after them, which he undoubtedly would have done but for the intervention of level-headed local people, who estimated, better than he, the frantic rage that was sweeping over the city. A certain Jew named Alexander attempted to address the multitude, but they howled him down. The mob in frenzied excitement were shouting, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and "the whole city was filled with confusion." Religious fervor supplemented with financial interest furnished a powerful stimulus for excited demonstration. For two hours the mob thus did honor to the goddess, Diana; until a familiar figure appeared in the person of the magistrate, or, as he was sometimes called, "the town clerk," an official of more importance than the name implies, as he evidently was an influential, if indeed not the chief, officer of the city. His official duties imposed the responsibility of presiding over assemblies of the people, hence he readily restored quiet and addressed them in calm manner and with rational speech. He reminded them that Paul had not profaned the temple nor indulged in

abusive expressions against the goddess, declared that the honor of the great goddess was safe, and advised Demetrius that if he had any grievance he should go to court. He rebuked the mob spirit that prompted the demonstration as itself offensive to the Roman law, for which they might have to give account; whereupon the rioting stopped almost as suddenly as it started, and the crowd, realizing the logic and wisdom of the admonition, disbursed. Yet the peril was still imminent, and the danger was too great for Paul to risk his life amid such fanatical influences. He called his disciples together, and, having exhorted them, departed. However, this was the beginning of the end of that form of paganism. Their literature was discredited, condemned, and burned before the populace; and as Paul's message was repeated by his converts, its influence was extended and its power increased. Churches were established throughout the surrounding country, in places where Paul had possibly not visited.

(This pagan city of world renown, Ephesus, finally faded in influence, and only fragments mark the location of the temple and other scenes of grandeur which flourished when Paul began to preach in the synagogues. With the fading of this important commercial community the worship of Diana ceased.)

Anxious to return to Macedonia, he took a coasting vessel for Philippi. He evidently suffered great depression, which was only temporary, and his wonderful courage sustained him, for amid it all he maintained his superb spirit of sympathy and love for his fellow men. He doubtless felt physically worn and, for the moment, was "weary even of life." This was one of the experiences he had in mind, no doubt, and which he described in his letter to the Corinthians. (2 Cor. 12: 10.) "Therefore I take

pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

While he was at Philippi he wrote his "Second Letter to the Corinthians," in which he contrasted the inexorable commandments of Mount Sinai with the new covenant of the ministry of the Spirit. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The Corinthians had sneered at Paul's physical stature, because of the infirmities of his body, possibly from scourging and stoning, and doubtless if they could have seen the scars from such punishment their scorn would have been even greater. He was not daunted by their taunting jest, for his experience had raised him to a plane beyond the reach of such ridicule. He had met trouble on every side, yet he would not remain depressed; perplexed, but not left in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. He never wavered, though tempests tossed him continuously. When the world seemed to surround him with implacable hostilities he never lost heart. His consuming purpose was to persuade men to yield unto noble conviction and to place a high estimate upon life. No man ever studied his task more earnestly or proceeded with greater tact, wisdom, or courage.

.

XVI

THE WISDOM AND POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

(1 Corinthians 1-4)

"Hail, Sovereign Goodness, All-productive Mind,
On all Thy works Thyself inscribed we find;
How variously all, how variously endowed,
How great their numbers, and each part how good;
How perfect then must the great Parent shine,
Who with one act of energy divine
Laid the vast plan and finished the design."

—BLACKLOCK.

WHILE Paul was at Ephesus he was advised regularly, through correspondence and personal messages, of conditions at Corinth. The two letters to the Corinthians, in the New Testament, indicate that they are compilations of fragments of a larger correspondence, which was prompted by verbal reports from Timothy, Titus, "the house of Chloe," Stephanas, and a letter from the Church at Corinth. Apollos, the Alexandrian Jew, disciple of John the Baptist, and later a convert to Christianity, had been in Corinth and returned to Ephesus while Paul was there.

Paul must have made a flying visit to the Achaian capital during his sojourn at Ephesus, for in 2 Corinthians (12: 14, 13: 1) he refers to his approaching visit as "the third time I am coming to you."

There was a repetition of the Galatian experience in Corinth; that is, the same contributing causes were operating there that had followed the apostle in the field of his first mission. The Judaists had gone there and, with modified methods of attack, had proclaimed the importance

of their ceremonials. There was less reaction than in Galatia to the challenge of Paul's exercise of apostolic functions; but the supremacy of the original apostles, who had seen Jesus, was urged with large degree of success, and the authority of Peter was glorified. This gave more consistent excuse to urge the recognition of the ceremonials, as the Council at Jerusalem granted to Peter the option of retaining these Jewish traditions in his preaching. However, the Jewish element was not dominant in this Greek city, and the Corinthians were not so vulnerable on account of prejudice as by reason of an inherent disposition to personal and partisan contentions. The Judaists were quick to discern this element of weakness and accordingly directed their efforts to the creation of dissensions.

The vast majority of those to whom this correspondence was addressed were Greeks, who felt that they were possessed of superior intellectual attainments, by reason of their special study of philosophical subjects, and for a further reason that Greek was then spoken by more people of foreign tongues than any other language. This superiority-complex caused them to assume an air of independence that resulted in a lack of personal interest and sympathy. Corinth was a city of gross immorality, conspicuous for its coarse depravity and reckless debauchery. Such were the conditions when Paul decided to make record of his attitude and ideas in the Corinthian crisis, which was threatening and difficult to correct.

With characteristic diplomacy, the apostle refers to the "enriched" endowments of the Corinthians, in power of expression and capacity for knowledge—accomplishments which qualified them to exercise that coöperation and harmony which he expressed as "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" for religious

work. Paul realized that they were not sufficiently grounded in the faith to enable them fully to comprehend Christianity, hence they were susceptible to the subtle agencies operating to create dissensions. He therefore devoted himself first to the discussion of these factions, which grouped themselves "as followers of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ." The opposition was endeavoring to arouse jealousy, which is always an insidious and pernicious influence, that often operates under the guise of constructive criticism, thereby attracting the attention and coöperation of those who are easily led. The same method of challenge of Paul's authority to administer baptism was adopted by the Judaists in Corinth as that pursued in Galatia. As a matter of fact, Paul never laid great emphasis on baptism; but he had no intention of permitting this charge to undermine his apostleship, and he disposed of the challenge, after recalling the small number that he had baptized, with the observation that "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel." He felt that these intellectual Greeks would not base their confidence in him solely on the ordinance of baptism, which was to them somewhat in the twilight zone of Jewish ceremonialism. Realizing the attitude of the Greeks toward *wisdom* and *power*, and the great emphasis they placed upon such endowments, he recognized the value of both and appealed to the Corinthians to attain the highest degree in each, by attuning themselves to the spirit that would make such realization possible. Despite the fact that "Christ crucified" was "a stumblingblock to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks," yet this Christ was "the power of God and the wisdom of God," and through union with him came the consummation of power and wisdom, in righteousness and sanctification and redemption. He reminded them that

in his teaching he had avoided rhetorical and philosophical language and had relied upon the spiritual power of God; that the gospel was not a philosophy but a revelation; that he was not a philosopher but a herald; that he was seeking to establish within them the faith which was not founded upon worldly knowledge but upon divine wisdom, revealed only by the Spirit of God. He was in reality seeking to elevate them to an idealism beyond wisdom in material things. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

He tells them of spiritual truth, as not acceptable to material man, but to the spiritual man, who is alive to all true values. With rather blunt frankness he advised them that he did not treat them as spiritual persons, for they were not sufficiently developed, as shown by jealousy and quarrels among them. Paul was not only making a valuation of the good things of life, he was also taking an inventory of the evil influences resulting from envy and strife and division. He fully realized the significance of the conflicting forces and the difficulties involved in establishing and maintaining harmony. He well knew that Apollos was not responsible for the dissensions—although his method and style may have been different from Paul's—nor Peter, who evidently had not been in Corinth. They all preached the same gospel, with possibly wide difference in manner of delivery, but not in substance or spirit.

If any particular element was directly responsible for the declaration, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ," it was the Judaists who created the crisis in Galatia and followed Paul into Achaia. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed?" He never lost sight of the supreme element of

his religion. Paul may have planted and Apollos watered, but "he that planteth and he that watereth are one," and "God giveth the increase."

Metaphor is a familiar figure of speech with Paul, as it was with Christ. He turns from husbandry to building. As a wise master-builder he had laid the foundation, and he had perfect confidence in it, for it was composed of the teachings of Jesus Christ—more enduring than gold or silver or precious stones. "Every man's work shall be made manifest"—all are builders, and the work of each shall be put to test, the result of which shall determine his reward. Let no man deceive himself, but let every man know that he is the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in him. Paul was appealing to that spirit for a realization of the finest things of life. "Let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." What is the standard and what is the test? That "a man be found faithful." What Paul was striving to impress upon the Corinthians was the elimination of their factious tendencies. He was pleading for loyalty to the teachings of Christ as the supreme purpose in life, and was endeavoring to impress this idea in order to meet the immediate needs of that community. Since wisdom and power meant so much to them, he emphasized the absolute supremacy of Christ as the wisdom and power of God. Contentions do not evidence wisdom and are certainly inimical to the maintenance of power. His reference to the attitude of the world toward the apostles of Christ, in being reviled and buffeted and persecuted, was not so much a rebuke as a challenge that said apostles did not deserve such treatment; but, because of

it, they were able to show that through genuine strength and wisdom they could "carry on" in spite of such adversities. He sends Timothy to remind them of the way of living which he had taught, reiterating his methods in the service of Christ.

His repeated reference to power indicates his interpretation of the Greek mind as vigorous and alert. He was appealing directly to such attitude and reminds them that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." Yet, he does not fail to make his point. In concluding his argument he observes that the greatest influence in the world is found in the power of love, manifest in the spirit of meekness. His estimate of the proper use of power was to consecrate it to service.

.

XVII

INCORRIGIBLE CORINTH

(1 Corinthians 5-12)

"Shun immorality! . . . Your body is the temple of the holy Spirit within you. . . . Glorify God with your body."—1 CORINTHIANS 6: 18-20.

PAUL's warning to the Corinthians about dissensions was but a prelude to a more severe rebuke for the notorious immorality that was tolerated among them. He had spent sufficient time in that cosmopolitan community, during which he had made such contacts through his trade as a tentmaker, as well as through his preaching and house-to-house visits, that he had acquired rather intimate knowledge of the environs of this degenerate city. He was able to estimate the complicated social web that had been woven by the cross-currents of a varied population—corrupt and profligate—which the fortune and favor of commercial activity had attracted. While Corinth had lost considerable prestige by reason of the more direct trade routes established from the East and Rome, yet it had been a Roman colony since the days of Julius Cæsar, and had, in a measure, been revived in strategic importance for the spread of social ideals and customs. Loose living had survived its commercial splendor. Licentiousness was more of a cult than a vice and was seeking to cloak itself under an exaggerated notion of spiritual superiority, where mortal flesh had no religious value, and the immortal spirit was all that was worth while. Under this insolent idea, unlimited license was given to bodily indulgences. While Paul ac-

cepted their maxim that "food is meant for the stomach, and the stomach for the food, but God will put an end to both of them," he emphasized the fact that the body is meant for the service of God, and hence is sacred. He made clear that bodily indulgence destroyed moral fiber and sacrificed the soul. In their wide and delusive ramifications of vice intrenchment, the Corinthians adroitly stated that since the observance of the Jewish law was not required, why any restraint upon the liberty of the individual, except in spiritual life, with which religion was exclusively concerned, and in which the flesh was a matter of indifference?

This debased semi-ethical tone met the greater response because of the low traditional standards of the Corinthians. The ordinary estimate of happiness at Corinth was to encourage unlimited license and gratification of inclinations, appetites, and passions. More than a thousand courtesans trafficked in lustful indulgences under the shrine of their favorite goddess, Aphrodite. The situation was truly discouraging because of this intrenched immorality, in its most seductive and brazen forms, proclaiming that type of liberality which was in effect sheer libertinism. Here was a veritable melting pot of all the elements of adventure and advancement from the territory tributary to the Mediterranean. The inevitable consequences were exemplified in social transgressions, not only violative of both Jewish and Roman law, but shocking to pagan sensibilities as well. When the flagrant case of improper relations of a Gentile convert with his own stepmother was reported to Paul, it provoked uncompromising and indignant rebuke. That this general exhortation on this subject was not comprehended, was possibly due, in some measure, to ignorance and inexperience. Doubtless while he was in Corinth he

held them on a higher social plane, but his absence gave opportunity for renewed activity of insidious influences. Paul knew the Greek mind and its methods of operation. His early education was under Greek influence. He had studied Greek philosophy and knew much about the traditions of the people he was addressing. He deemed it necessary to appeal to them in somewhat argumentative way. "Do you know that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit who is within you, and whom you have from God?" He further admonished that this dwelling place of God's spirit was the seat of the spiritual life, not for self-gratification, but for the glorification of God. "Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

Students of Paul conclude that the latter portion of the sixth chapter is a fragment of a separate letter, inserted here, as all that was necessary on this serious question, which was shameful to many, and so disgraceful and shocking as to encourage secrecy and the suppression of the larger part of his severe rebuke. The reason it is believed that Paul dealt with this question in a more rigorous and extended manner is that such revolting conditions must have undoubtedly aroused him to full and complete discussion of this vexing subject. He refers to a letter in which he warns them not to associate with immoral people (5: 10, 11). But as to what the Church should do with such open and defiant transgressions, as the case above cited, he makes clear, with a familiar illustration, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" He therefore advised that the wrongdoers be expelled from the Church, that heroic effort be made to eliminate vice and wickedness, for the sake of purity and truth.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in answer to inquiries by them on stubborn and serious subjects. There was a pro-

gressive and enlightened element in that community, fully alive to the realization that the profligacy which prevailed was a menace to their welfare. Especially was it destroying the fabric of their social system, and they well knew that nothing could bring happiness to a people whose social standards were so base and degenerate. History reveals the story of man's efforts for a permanent basis of happiness and progress; and while sane governmental regulations are necessary, yet the fundamentals of society are laid in personal conduct, and Christianity is primarily an appeal to the individual to adopt a way of living that is sane and clean.

Paul was attempting to apply Christian principles to Corinthian conditions, as he interpreted them, and their way of living had been so vastly different from that which he preached that a less heroic heart would have abandoned hope.

From the Corinthian standard of immorality the ideals of home life had vanished, and Paul's observations with reference to marriage should be estimated in the light of the degenerate conditions which confronted him; otherwise we could hardly justify the sordid advice which he gave that it was better to marry than to be on fire with passion. He no doubt realized how revolutionary it would be to attempt to establish ideals of connubial bliss with these Corinthians, by entirely ignoring the physical side of life. He took conditions as they were and made his appeal through sexual relations as the most effective way to reach the fundamental impulse which prompted them. Possibly there was no other available approach.

Paul's attitude toward woman has been the subject of much comment. He evidently was never married; yet he held that relation in supreme reverence and felt galling

disgust at the lack of loyalty of the Corinthians to the marriage obligations. Respect for women was sadly lacking in the profligate city. Their selfishness was so supreme that he felt the most consistent appeal was to their self-respect, in his attempt to restore fidelity between husband and wife. He recognized no compromise, but demanded strict observance of the marriage vows. Divorce was easy in those days, and a letter of divorcement issued by the husband was all that was necessary for the cancellation of the marriage contract. Such regulations were naturally subject to grievous abuse. He shamed their conduct and their tolerance of such conditions. No more practical teacher than Paul ever gave instruction on intimate and delicate subjects. These questions of social morality were extremely difficult by reason of the conditions existing in Corinth; indeed they have never ceased to be troublesome. The entire aim of Paul in his exhortation to the Corinthians is to preserve the sanctity of the marriage relation. While he does not maintain a supremely chivalrous attitude toward woman, he does not tolerate failure by her husband to respect her, but commands his fidelity to her as imperative duty, according to the teachings of Christ.

Paul had not been unmindful of woman's help in the cause of Christianity. He recognized notable coadjutors in Lydia, Priscilla, and Phœbe.

Regarding the eating of things sacrificed to idols, about which the Corinthians had written, Paul made reply that they all possessed knowledge, but faith was the essential thing; ceremonial observations were secondary. So long as their faith was genuine and true it made little difference what they ate; and while knowledge was proper, yet it sometimes puffed up; but faith builded up. He was marshaling his arguments for a final summing up of the forces

of knowledge, faith, and love, as constituting the power of individual liberty for the realization of the greatest values in life. The exercise of these elements involved self-sacrifice, self-restraint, self-discipline, and that adaptability necessary to meet the changing scenes and conflicting forces that ever combat a servant of Christ. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more." Unto the Jews he became a Jew, that he might gain the Jews; to them that were under the law, as under the law, that he might gain them that were under the law; to them that were without the law, as without the law, that he might gain them that were without the law; to the weak, he became weak, that he might gain the weak; all things to all men, that he might by all means save some. The picture which Paul gives of Christian life is indeed illuminating. His persistent effort was for specific practical results. The ultimate purpose is the building up of "the body of Christ."

He makes estimate of "spiritual gifts" concerning which he would not have them ignorant, as they are the greatest of life values. These gifts include the exercise of wisdom, knowledge, faith, power, mercy, and love—all leading to "a more excellent way." As we proceed we find, more and more, that Paul was seeking to interpret to his fellow man this imperious power which he called "Spirit."

In "Paradise Lost" Milton was praying for this revelation in the lines:

"Celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

XVIII

THE MOST EXCELLENT WAY OF LIVING

(1 Corinthians 13)

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."—1 CORINTHIANS 13: 13.

PAUL covers a wide range of exhortation and advice in his correspondence with the Corinthians; and he reflects rare versatility in his swing from coarse criticism to fine poetical ecstasy—from severe reproach to lofty heights of sublime spiritual revelation. The eloquence of his speech should not dazzle the main object he had in view, which was a firm foundation for his faith. He found it in the *motive* that prompts the various expressions of religious life—indeed of all human activity. The culmination of all his efforts and the embodiment of his idea of the most excellent way of living is expressed in his matchless chapter on charity. He takes inventory of the influences which operate upon life and appraises them by the standard of brotherly love. He begins with "the tongues of men and of angels," which is but another expression for the "gift of tongues" frequently mentioned in the New Testament. This refers to a custom, when an ecstatic utterance of praise was employed at a time of great enthusiasm and excitement and was regarded as a sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That it is included in this enumeration of things worth-while is evidence that it had made some impression upon the Greeks at Corinth, as one of the gifts highly esteemed by the early Church. Its relative impor-

tance in Paul's worship is revealed by his statement: "I speak with tongues more than ye all; yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue" (1 Cor. 14: 18, 19). Even the "tongue of angels" was of no avail for practical purposes unless it be understood. Paul was emphasizing the fact that communication by way of revelation or of knowledge was of greater value than mysterious speech, unless it is understood by others.

Prophecy with the Hebrews represented a religious movement of world-wide historical importance. As a supernatural endowment it flourished in Israel long before Christ, and yet it acquired deeper and wider import through its connection with early Christianity. It originated with the idea of special favor with the Deity, enabling the one enjoying such consideration to foretell events. The rise, progress, and decay of prophecy in its various forms and ramifications covers a considerable period, which history has not definitely defined.

The moral and spiritual elements were predominant, and in this connection dreams and visions were recognized as of that higher spiritual enlightenment associated with prophecy in its best estate. Paul was profoundly impressed with visions, possibly because of his experiences at Jerusalem, Damascus, Troas, and elsewhere.

"Thus saith the Lord" either preceded or followed the declaration that was received as of supernatural significance. The working of the prophetic mind under inspiration was the blending of the human and divine elements in such expression as to command sublime respect. The fundamental notion of prophecy was revelation; hence its inseparable connection with religious teaching. Teachers, so

commissioned of God to declare his will, were respected as the forerunners of a coming Deliverer, whom they predicted in one form or another as the Messiah or Saviour, through whom the glories of God would be realized. There were many prophets in both the Old and New Testaments. John the Baptist was recognized by a wide group as a genuine and true prophet and declared by Jesus as the greatest of them all. Paul linked prophecy with knowledge and the understanding of all mysteries, and made reverent observation of the prophet as he that "speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort."

He placed a supreme value upon faith—significant of sublime belief, confidence, and trust—the essence of light and life—the quintessence of the glory of God, revealed to the world through Jesus Christ.

But all these gifts, which were so highly important in Paul's day, together with the most unselfish generosity and vicarious sacrifice, were absolutely insufficient without the guiding and propelling motive of brotherly love.

The essential elements of this most excellent way of living are followed by application of them to the impatience, the jealousy, the vanity, the backbiting, the selfishness, and the iniquity that threatened the Corinthian Christians. Real sublime conduct in life is inspired by charity, practiced in patience, generosity, kindness, humility, courtesy, good temper, and sincerity. These are the attributes of charity which, when applied to daily thoughts, motives, and activities, make it the supreme quality of life. Patience is love passive; generosity is love in expression; kindness is love in action. Humility is self-assertion restrained; courtesy is respect expressed in diplomacy; good temper is the evidence of love's operations; and sincerity is truth woven with love. Paul well knew the perils that

confronted his converts at Corinth, and he made the highest intellectual appeal. Therefore he based all upon truth. Charity "rejoiceth in the truth," and hence it "never faileth." Appreciation of the permanent and fundamental elements of human nature inevitably leads to a proper estimate of Christ's purpose on earth, "to bear witness unto the truth." The Greeks were zealous to know the truth, and indeed they were presumed to have had the greatest urge for truth of any people of that time, and they rejoiced in that reputation. Paul realized this pride of opinion which they entertained as all but a national spirit, and he seized it as an avenue of approach. It was extremely difficult for a man of Paul's standing to give them advice, and a sympathetic contact was absolutely essential. He felt that he had reached a place where he should attempt this contact from the highest plane of human contemplation, and he assumed an attitude of high mental altitude.

At the beginning of his first letter to the Corinthians, he met them on their own level, which, we have observed, seemed rather sordid. He talked about casual things in a rather coarse way, because he wanted to gain their confidence and make himself thoroughly understood. He used figures of speech which they appreciated, but he never indulged in any form of familiarity that compromised his dignity. He addressed them with the spirit of sympathy, with an attitude of respect and interest, and in a manner that entitled him to their confidence. His diplomacy was dignified and commanding in dealing with matters intimate and personal, which were difficult to discuss without giving offense or at least creating resentment. It was a trying situation and required studied effort. He was making appeal for higher standards of life and nobler ideals of Christian character to a people of pagan background, with

traditions inimical to his teachings; and yet he felt that they were worth-while and that their philosophical tradition had attuned them to a finer plane of living. Only as they were lifted to loftier levels of self-respect, and recognized more unselfish consideration for each other, could he hope to implant that faith and feeling, which he sought to establish, in the realization of the way of living which he offered them. He declared truth as the great abstract thing in which he rejoiced, and the definite, concrete examples of this fundamental principle were daily practices of faith, hope, and love—inspiring experiences; and the greatest thing in the world is love. It is as enduring and has as high value as anything God has ordained. It is the power of God—purifying and uplifting—that defines the attitude of man toward God and rules his relation with his fellow men. It is the one influence in all the world that harmonizes all the purposes and powers of humanity for righteousness. Love is Christianity's law of life. Hence Paul's observations in his lyric of love are as sound in philosophy as they are illuminating and lofty in style of expression.

“For life, with all it yields of joy or woe
And hope and fear,
Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
How love might be, hath been indeed, and is.”

XIX

RESURRECTION AND IMMORTALITY

(1 Corinthians 15)

"This is the death of death, to breathe away a breath
And know the end of strife, and taste the deathless life,
And joy without a fear, and smile without a tear;
And work, nor care to rest, and find the last the best"

—MALTBY D. BARCOCK.

IN concluding his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul reminded them that what he had written was but a reiteration of the gospel which he had theretofore preached to them. He was eager to emphasize the vastness of human possibilities and to make clear the proposition that, without sane convictions, governing their way of living, the mysteries of life are bewildering; that without a belief in immortality, the mystery of death is inexplicable. He approached this subject through historic review of the resurrection of Christ (15: 4-8), and linked his own personal experience, in the vision on the Damascus road, with a narrative of the observations of Peter, James, and the five hundred brethren and the apostles. He made no discrimination between the hearsay testimony and his own knowledge, which leaves no room to doubt Paul's belief in the supernatural manifestations of Christ after his crucifixion. This is as persuasive as any proof we have of the resurrection of Christ. Paul had no illusions. He dealt with facts. When he realized that the character of Jesus was so supreme in the spiritual realm, his faith readily accepted this incomparable man-spirit as typifying the true spirit of

God. The fact that he was able to make himself manifest to the consciousness of his contemporaries, after his crucifixion at Calvary, increased the faith of his disciples and of the world that he had brought life and immortality to light.

He turned what had long been cherished as a hope into a solid certainty and endowed the idea of eternal life with greater confidence than had theretofore existed.

Belief in God is a prerequisite to faith in immortality. That belief is more universal to-day than ever before. Humanity longs for immortality. According to what Paul termed "tidings of the Spirit," immortality follows as a corollary to a belief in God. Voltaire's statement has often been quoted that "if there was no God, it would be necessary to invent one." The world has come to recognize that the existence of God "is a truth so plain that it knows no proof, as it is a truth so high that it admits of none." Faith in life after death comes as an inevitable conviction with the belief in God as a Spirit of infinite wisdom, power, and love. "This is the gift of God, Life Eternal."

There has always been a longing for immortality. Socrates and Plato gave definite declarations of such belief. In seeking to decipher the order and meaning of our relation to the universe, there is no question of such supreme importance as the eternal existence of the spirit within us, which we call the soul. So fascinating is the thought of immortality that it has been earnestly urged that scientific proof be furnished of the reality of this supreme conception. This has never been done. It is not now regarded as necessary. We would be left in a poor plight if belief were confined to subjects susceptible of scientific demonstration. Martineau said: "We do not believe in immortality because we can prove it, but we forever try to prove

it because we believe it." There is a frequent disposition to arouse conflict between science and religion, because science does not deal directly with immortality. This conflict has almost reached the vanishing point. The religious impulse is as eager for the truth as the scientific, and religion is as confident of its convictions as science is of its conclusions. Science teaches the conservation of all material things and declares that matter may undergo radical changes of form, but is never destroyed. This demonstration of science is universally accepted. It is not a far-fetched analogy to apply this scientific conclusion to the spirit world. Does it not seem reasonable that the super-material within us, which Paul calls "the spirit," should continue when the body passes through the processes of disintegration and change, after death? The fact that immortality does not come directly within the realm of scientific research is no reason to discredit or disparage either.

With full appreciation of the achievement of science, we would hardly say that all operations of the mind must come within its realm; for, indeed, we find that the most satisfactory mental maneuvers do not come from cold scientific calculations and deductions. If our existence were one continuous process of working out perfectly accurate mathematical equations—eliminating and discarding everything not susceptible of such calculations—we would reduce ourselves to a materialistic level of existence, vastly less wonderful than the realm in which we derive strength and comfort from the joy of love, the pleasure of service, the stimulus of courage, and the genuine satisfaction that comes with faith in God and man. Immortality may be impossible of demonstration through mathematical calculation, but faith in this sublime hope is a wholesome guide

in this charming existence which we experience and makes vast contributions to higher ideals among men.

Intelligent human beings have come to classify things as to their relative importance under a general caption of "values." Thus far, in the realm of accomplishments, certain world relations have been worked out, and the rule of orderly and just sequence has been rather well established. Faith confirms this classification of values. Religion is the realization of those great values, which are eternal and indestructible.

We have come to the conscious realization and firm conviction that, in this realm which we call creation, the Creator has evidenced his highest work in the endowments conferred upon human beings, and we have reached the definite conclusion that man was created in the image and likeness of God. That which is of supreme value in our existence is the spirit of man—like unto the Spirit of God. We have delighted in the discovery that in the divine economy of the universe, as thus far revealed to man in his search for truth, nothing is lost in the material world through the changing processes of nature. If life has found contact with realities of such superior importance to material interests, then we can hardly conceive, even in our cold calculations, which must necessarily be rational, that the supreme values of creation will ultimately end in nothingness. If material values are indestructible, then is it not a rational conclusion that soul values are eternal? If this adventure of creation has a divine element in it, which we firmly believe we experience, would it not be inconceivably inconsistent that the power that gave this divine reality would blot out its finest creation and leave the things of lesser value to exist? Can the superior values of the universe be preserved without the immortality

of the soul, which embodies this most significant of all values? It would be a strange theory or formula that would assume or attempt to demonstrate that all the marvelous facts of life and the benignant purposes in the processes of time, which have been found to be real and genuine, should come to an end, with nothing substituted in the place of these absolute values. The truth is, all the power and capacity of mind which we possess, operated with all the resources of accumulated experience we are able to command, forces us to the inevitable conclusion that the First Great Cause that started this universe—though of such infinite purposes and power that we cannot comprehend—would not put an end to the supreme values of his creation, and leave the baser material creations to continue forever.

Paul declared: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Our religion recognizes the law and order of the universe as derived from and regulated by a superhuman intelligence, which we call God. From this same superintelligence we derive our ideals of justice, mercy, righteousness, and love, which are the aspirations of our highest endeavors. Thus has life found contact with eternal realities and with it has come faith in an existence commensurate with more transcendent values. How and where this immortal life goes on we do not know. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." But that eternal world, the

abode of God and of blessed spirits, must be a state higher and finer than what we have known in the order of material things. Hence, faith in immortality is the most fascinating contemplation that has ever engaged the human mind. It affords finer appreciation of the words of Emerson, that "all minds open into the infinite mind."

XX

TRIUMPH AT CORINTH

(2 Corinthians 1-9)

"The supreme art in life, above all other arts, is the art of living together justly and charitably. . . . There is no other thing that is so taxing, requiring so much education, so much wisdom, so much practice, as how to live with our fellow men. In importance this art exceeds all productive industries which we teach our children. All skill and knowledge aside from that is nothing. . . . The business of life is to know how to get along with our fellow men."—H. W. BEECHER.

PAUL's visit to Corinth, during his sojourn at Ephesus (A.D. 54-55), was evidently short and unsatisfactory. Conditions were such that strategy suggested that he retreat and resort to further appeal through correspondence. The invasion of the Judaists, who had abandoned Galatia to pursue the missionary into Greek territory, was then commanding sensational attention. Paul was not dismayed as he returned to Ephesus, although he was doubtless provoked that his adversaries were continuing their opposition in defiance of the decision of the Conference at Jerusalem (A.D. 49), assigning Paul and his colleagues to Gentile territory, with definite authority to omit the Mosaic ceremonies from their teaching of the Christian faith.

His interest in his converts never abated. That he was genuinely concerned about Corinth is evidenced by his supreme effort to correct all erroneous influences, through his first letter to the Corinthians, which is a powerful appeal, based upon facts from his own experience, which

were somewhat brutally arrayed, but finally relieved by ornate and effective speech in his marvelous chapter on Charity and his glorious discourse on Immortality. By reason of his ineffectual visit, Paul determined to make another approach to Corinth through Macedonia. He desired to visit Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea, to stimulate the work in those places, which had been so abruptly interrupted on his second mission. This would give the Corinthians time to digest his letters, in which he was pouring out all the resources of his soul in his endeavor to stop their dissensions and have them hold steadfast to the faith they had professed. He was hoping to meet Titus at Troas, with direct report as to developments in Achaia. His extreme anxiety was described by him as "fightings without and fears within," and in his impatience he left Troas and hastened across the Ægean Sea to Macedonia to meet the messenger from Corinth. It was after this conference with Titus that he wrote the first part of the Second Letter to the Corinthians. There is such contrast of spirit between the first nine and the remaining chapters of the letter that it is evident that they were separate communications; and, it would seem from the narrative, that the first portion was written subsequent to the last four chapters. The text indicates excerpts from other letters than the two mentioned, indicating that he had considerable correspondence with the Corinthian Christians while he was at Ephesus, in addition to what has been preserved.

The report received from Titus in Macedonia contained many facts which required attention; but on the whole it was comforting and reassuring to the missionary, and his response showed the wonderful spirit of appreciation. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye

sorrowed to repentance." He had in mind to impress the importance of genuine repentance, which was more necessary and significant than mere sorrow. With similar enthusiasm he declared, "I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things." His intense nature experienced thrilling reaction when Titus reported that the Corinthians had shown a disposition to shake off the pernicious influences of his enemies and renew their confidence in the way of living he had taught them. He felt a triumph of victory over the forces of evil that marshaled themselves against him. They recognized that Paul's religious influence was about to become dominant in Greece, and they made desperate endeavor to circumvent him. They began by renewing denial of his apostleship, and with subtle suggestions went back to his first visit to Corinth and sought to arouse suspicion as to his motive in refusing to accept financial support from his converts there.

While Paul was writing to the Corinthians in fine spirit, he was adroitly answering the charges which had been made against him, by oblique attacks upon their arguments. He did not make direct answer to the Judaists' challenge of his sincerity, which they based upon his letter of rebuke, but he assured the Corinthians that it was written "with many tears," not that they should be grieved, but that they might know the abundant love he had for them. His personal interest in them was expressed in his keener anxiety for their spiritual welfare.

He had written them of his purpose to visit Corinth *en route* to Macedonia, and when he changed his plans his enemies charged him with fickleness. He answered this with assurance, "that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." During his visit to Corinth from Ephesus, he had evidently been grossly insulted by some one of the

opposition, which was later resented by his followers, in summary fashion, by extreme punishment of ostracism of the offender. Paul now invokes them to forgive the culprit and receive him again (5: 11), "lest Satan should get an advantage of us."

Those who were seeking to discredit him made display of the credentials they bore, in the form of letters of commendation, and they made bold to emphasize the authority of the law from Mount Sinai. Paul declared a new covenant, exemplified in the teaching of Christ, written "not in tables of stone," but "with the Spirit of the living God." He compared the glory of the spirit of righteousness, and drove home to the intellectual Corinthians the truth that "the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

In this glad letter to the penitent Corinthians Paul seeks to strengthen their faith by a form of argument, not controversial in style, but quite pertinent to the controversies that had confused them.

His opponents had sneered at his physical infirmity, which was not inconsistent with the provisions of their law, which required that not only the sacrificial victim, but the officiating priest, should be "without blemish"; hence their excuse for including this charge against his apostolic claim, although his disfigurement was due to punishment inflicted as penalty for his apostolic service.

In reply to this, he made no appeal for sympathy, but in humility declared that the excellency of the power of the Spirit, temporarily "in earthen vessels" of the body, was from God and not from him. This furnished appropriate opportunity for a dissertation on courage, of which Paul possessed as much as any soldier that ever stood under fire of battle. He was justified in giving his per-

sonal experience. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." There is no finer example than Paul of a man with a stout heart, through all his experiences.

This also gave occasion for him logically to make a timely declaration on immortality. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Paul styled himself an ambassador for Christ, and his chief concern was to perform the work of the ministry which had been intrusted to him. His ambition was to persuade his fellow men to practice a way of living consistent with the finest realities of life. He was seeking to stimulate the souls of men to loftier conceptions.

He inventoried the experience requiring patience of "the ministers of God"—"in affliction, in necessities, in distresses, in strifes, in imprisonment, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, and in fastings." Following these practical lessons, he exhorts them to purity of life, expressing his confidence in them and his great affection for them, which he craves to have reciprocated. Paul's love for his fellow men was a truly sublime sentiment. His every activity was prompted by generous and sincere motive, and his concern for the spiritual welfare of the Corinthians showed all the intimacy and earnestness of genuine personal interest. His confidence in them was not so great as entirely to relieve

his anxiety concerning the influence of his enemies, therefore he was constantly endeavoring to strengthen their faith.

His interest in the poor saints at Jerusalem never abated. He concluded his first letter with an appeal for contributions and again he renews that appeal with deliberate and determined argument. His efforts in the interests of this cause were not limited to any particular field of his operations, but were universal. He sought to make this cause of common interest to Jews and Gentiles, with the hope that it might be a factor in binding them together. He had no personal pride in the matter as he preferred to have the contributions carried to Jerusalem by a local representative from each of the several communities from which they were sent: Timothy for Galatia, Luke for Macedonia, and Titus for Achaia. He was endeavoring to establish religion as a habit with the Corinthians. The Judaists had been challenging his authority in their effort to destroy his teaching. They had made the most of his absence, and it is significant that his letter was so effective. His appeal was not so much to doctrine as to life, with its practical reality of stern conditions, which can best be met by recognizing the love of truth as synonymous with the love of man and the love of God. While his personal aims and hopes were prominent in this letter, his motive was generous, showing his purpose to establish a profound religious faith in the Corinthians.

.

XXI

SARCASTIC REBUKE AND INVECTIVE

(2 Corinthians 10-13)

"After all, the kind of world one carries about in himself is the important thing, and the world outside takes all its grace, color, and value from that."—
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE last four chapters of the Second Letter to the Corinthians is a combination of sarcastic denunciation and modest self-defense. It is quite possible that it was written at Ephesus and sent by Titus, immediately prior to Paul's departure for Troas, hence Paul was anxious to hear the reaction from it and his anxiety caused him to hasten to Macedonia. It is a consistent inference that this is the painful letter he mentions in chapter 2: 4: "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye would be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." He makes similar reference again in 7: 8: "For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not repent, though I regret it; for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season." That the epistle was effective may be assumed from the report made by Titus. It was to realize the full advantage of the achievements thus attained that justified this follow-up of vigorous appeal. The crisis was imminent and Paul felt impelled to resort to severe rebuke in his efforts to counteract the influence of the Judaists, who, with fanaticism reinforced by rancor of hatred, were resorting to every

device they could conceive, to disturb his followers and destroy his influence. That his written messages were having substantial influence is shown by the admission of his adversaries that "his letters are weighty and powerful," which they sought to counteract by the charge that "his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible." The sarcasm of his answer to this, that he does not venture to compare himself with those who approve themselves, emphasizes his direct charge that "they do not show good sense."

He adroitly suggests that he did not consider it an extravagant boast to remind them that he was the first to bring Christ's interpretation of God to them, and that it is not the man who approves himself who is really approved, but the man whom the Lord approves.

When they reflected upon his motive in preaching to the Corinthians without compensation, he replied that he did not propose ever to be a burden to them and recalled that his brethren from Macedonia supplemented his earnings to meet his daily needs while he was preaching the gospel at Corinth. This candid statement may have contained a veiled element of rebuke. But no one, anywhere in Greece, could silence him as to the truth and wisdom of the teachings of Christ as he conceived them.

No one who knew anything about Paul could consistently challenge his course, and when it was called in question, with the deliberate purpose to discount his influence, he was justified in recounting his experiences of sacrifice and suffering (11: 24-28) as the best evidence of his own consistency in his work, and at the same time conclusive proof of the falsity of the charges of the enemies.

The deceitful workers, with smooth and insinuating speech, masquerading as apostles of Christ, could not elim-

inate him by claims of superiority as to their origin, their works, or their sacrifices. His record showed him a Hebrew, an Israelite, descended from Abraham, a worker for Christ—with greater labors, far more sacrifices, vastly worse sufferings, and more frequent dangers than any or all of them.

Five times he had received one less than forty lashes by the Jews. He had been beaten three times by the Romans. He had been brutally stoned, shipwrecked three times, and adrift at sea for a night and a day. During his frequent journeys he had escaped many dangers, of "rivers and robbers," from his own people and from the heathen—from city, desert, and sea—from false brethren—through toil and hardship, sleepless nights, hunger and thirst and cold. What a catalogue of suffering and sacrifice! What physical stamina to have endured the labor and suffered the torture and privation which he experienced! This record was a complete answer to their charges of cowardice. Facts of personal experience are the best evidence of personal attitudes and attributes.

But above it all his greatest suffering was his anxiety for his churches. For their advancement, he took pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, and in distresses. He did not want their money, and he rebuked them for intimating that he was crafty in refusing to burden them. He renewed his profession of interest in them and expressed grave fear that there might be quarreling, jealousy, bad feeling, rivalry, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder among them, and that he might have to mourn for many who had continued in their old way of living and had never repented of the impurity, immorality, and sensuality in which they had indulged.

His patent purpose was to counteract the dissensions

created by the Judaists. His solicitude for the Corinthian converts induced him to take an attitude, which he had not assumed theretofore, of comparing his work and qualifications with the accomplishments of those opposing him.

He gave the Corinthians assurance that he would continue his labors among them so as to defeat those who were seeking to make it appear that their message was similar to his. He unequivocally charged such as being false prophets, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ; and compared them to Satan, who masqueraded as an angel of light, and concluded with the prediction that their doom would be retribution for their works.

In giving assurance that his greatest anxiety was his concern for all the churches, he made clear that if he appeared to boast, it was not because of personal pride or vanity, but by reason of his confidence in the superiority of Christ's teachings to any other instruction they had received. The defense of his words and conduct was merely that of a servant of God. The suffering of insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for the sake of the cause he presented was gracious, but he resented the aspersions against him, which brought in question the genuineness of the cause he had championed.

Paul was contemplating his third visit to Corinth when he wrote this letter, and he wanted to exhaust all the influence he could exert through correspondence in order that they might be prepared; hence the reiteration that it was in the sight of God and as a follower of Christ that he was speaking. He knew that even though he answered the Judaists in satisfactory manner, there would yet be danger, from their natural disposition, for quarreling, jealousy, bad feeling, rivalry, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder; therefore his urge against these dangers. While he had

asked for contributions to the Church at Jerusalem, he made it perfectly plain that it was not their money, but their welfare, that gave him greatest concern.

He reminded them that he had theretofore given warning, which he repeated, that upon his return he would not spare those who were then in sin.

Paul concludes with perfect reliance upon power and truth. Though it was through weakness that Christ was crucified, "yet he liveth by the power of God," which same power was available to them that possess the faith. He appealed to the Corinthians to test themselves, whether they be in the faith—"prove your own selves." If things were not as they should be, their faith would protest against such conditions, unless indeed they be "reprobates." His prayer was that they do no wrong, not because of his personal pride, but that they should prove genuine, even if he fail to stand the test. "For it is not against the truth that we have any power, but only on the truth's behalf."

Thus we see that Paul made his appeal to the Corinthians in these letters, by covering every possible impulse, ambition, or temptation that threatened them. He was resourceful, in that his versatility not only fathomed every evil that then beset his converts, but also appealed, through every avenue of approach, to withstand all future attacks, and remain steadfast in the faith he had taught them. He marshaled the facts of his own wide experience with intimate analogy, and held nothing in reserve, but exhausted all his resources to rescue the Corinthians from the thralldom of sin which threatened to engulf them. He made earnest endeavor to bring them to the light of a conviction that the way of living, taught by Jesus Christ, meant the realization of the finest experience it was possible for them to enjoy.

XXII

INDICTMENT OF IGNORANCE AND INSINCERITY

(Romans 1-3)

"It is a blessed thing that in all times there have always been men to whom religion has not presented itself as a system of doctrine, but as an elemental life in which the soul of man came into very direct and close communion with the soul of God."—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

PAUL's Epistle to the Romans was written at Corinth, where he was guest of Gaius. Having laid the foundation of Christianity in Galatia and Greece, he was preparing to return to Jerusalem, with contributions for the poor, which had been gathered from Macedonia and Achaia, during his third missionary journey. His pioneer spirit prompted him to go to Spain—the western boundary of the then civilized world—and he contemplated a visit to Rome *en route*. He had longed to go to Rome, then a center of preëminence, quite beyond that occupied by any other city of the world since that time. His practice had been to carry the gospel to centers of strategic importance. He had also pursued the policy of preaching "the good news only where Christ's name was unknown, so as not to build on foundations that other men had laid," and thus fulfilled the Scripture (according to Isaiah 12: 15), "They who have never been told of him will see, and they who have never heard of him will understand" (Rom. 15: 21). He regarded the Romans "as among the rest of the heathen," and at the same time acknowledged himself debtor

"both to Greeks and to foreigners, to the cultivated and to the uncultivated."

Numerous impulses may have prompted Paul to write this epistle. Experience had demonstrated his power through the medium of correspondence. He had successfully encountered formidable opposition in his missionary work by his letters to the converts under his preaching in Galatia and at Corinth. He feared that the same influences of the Judaists which had opposed him in those places would precede him at Rome. He purposed not only to anticipate their arguments and place them on the defensive, but he also wished to elaborate and put in permanent record the lessons of life upon which his faith was founded. While he longed to go to Rome, he was not sure that he would ever realize such privilege, for he was determined to deliver the contributions to the "poor saints" in Jerusalem; and while this should strengthen his position with the "pillars" of the Church there, it might also intensify the enmity of the Judaists who had grown desperate under their defeat in Galatia and Corinth. Paul well knew that they would take advantage of any opportunity to destroy him. However, he never despaired of accomplishing his purpose, and he proposed to send a message to Rome that would prepare the way for the "spiritual gift" he hoped to impart to them, to the end that they might "be established" in their Christian faith. He was confident that when he did come unto them he would come "in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." Hence he urged them to join with him in earnest prayer to God that he might escape the cruel rage of "the disobedient" at Jerusalem and come to Rome "in joy through the will of God." This indicated real apprehension of danger at Jerusalem and shows that he was awake to all the perils that beset

him. It also illustrates his courage in finishing the task he had promised and in which he had such deep personal concern.

No wonder he put forth the effort of his life to make this communication comprehensive in its sweep and grasp of the fundamental principles of Christianity.

The Epistle to the Romans marks a distinct epoch in Paul's career. He had finished his third missionary journey and had demonstrated the power of the faith within him to change the lives of men from paganism and Judaism to Christianity. He had accomplished a definite purpose as to a defined territory and was ready to carry his message to new fields. His experience had profited him greatly in devising methods to meet opposition, and he sought to capitalize these benefits in further achievements.

He first declares his credentials: "Paul, a slave of Jesus Christ, called as an apostle, set apart to declare God's good news, which he promised long ago through his prophets in the holy scriptures, about his Son, . . . through whom we have received God's favor and been commissioned in his name to urge obedience and faith upon all the heathen, including you who have been called to belong to Jesus Christ."

He declared as his first premise that the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "*The just shall live by faith.*" In order to make effective the message for divine righteousness as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ, it was necessary to show the inadequacy of the Jewish notion of the supremacy of the law, and the iniquity which follows the heathen practices of pagan worship. He had come in such

immediate contact with both of these influences that his actual experience qualified him to deal with the facts and fallacies of each. His arraignment of the attitude of paganism and Judaism may be appropriately styled "an indictment of willful ignorance and beguiling insincerity." This indictment was severe, but it was based upon actual facts of experience and sound reason. As he wrote he looked out upon the degrading and disgusting impurity of the Corinthians and the unutterable ravages which wickedness had wrought in their social system, and drew a dreadful picture of the heathen world, recognizing no excuse for their ignorance. So much that was known of God was manifest to them, and had been discussed by their own scholars who had been students, for a sufficient period of time, that it was apparent that God had been revealed to them in their research of nature. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle had written about the realities as well as the mysteries of life, therefore the ignorance of the pagan Greeks was inexcusable. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead." But they had indulged in futile speculations until they became vain in their imaginations, and in their stupidity their minds had become beclouded. For the splendor of the immortal God they substituted images in the form of mortal man, birds, animals, and reptiles. They exchanged the truth of God for what was palpably false and worshiped and served what he created instead of the Creator. Hence God abandoned them to their unholy impulses and immoral conduct. The degradation and depravity which followed were the inevitable penalty of their indecencies. Their revelry in every kind of wrongdoing resulted in envy, murder, quarreling, deceit, and ill nature, and made

them gossips, slanderers—abhorrent to God—insolent, overbearing, boastful, ingenious in evil, conscienceless, and treacherous. Worst of all, they not only reveled in such iniquity, but rejoiced in it and applauded it in others.

This indictment of pagan degeneracy was at that time appropriate for the Roman world. Paul's picture of the degrading influences of the brutal and licentious ideals of that heathen society, as revealed in its own debauchery and despair, portrayed conditions at Rome quite as real as at Corinth. It must be remembered that lust had, in large degree, banished natural affections in that capital city. Infants were abandoned in desolate places, the influence of home was unknown, and society was entertained by and applauded gladiatorial combats, in the arena, between those charged with crime and maddened wild beasts.

Having demonstrated the vicious results of pagan worship among the Gentiles, Paul turns to the crowning triumph of the Jews in declaring the supremacy and saving power of the law. The Romans held their law in high regard. Augustus had reorganized their system of jurisprudence and made it a power in the empire at that time and a great influence ever thereafter. It was important to make proper discrimination as to the function of jurisprudence.

No one had greater appreciation for law, in its proper sphere, than Paul. He well realized that no social system could be established or maintained without it. But it was a human institution and not in reality a divine revelation. As a human agency it was not only necessary but it was fine; yet while it was conducive to good citizenship, it was not sufficient unto salvation. Furthermore, pride in proclaiming the law could not excuse insincerity in observing it. He who sits in judgment must be consistent and not

commit the offenses for which he punishes another, for by so doing he condemns himself. He made clear that the Jews did not occupy an assured position, although their privileges had been far superior to the Gentiles. "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much in every way." In glorifying the Jews he exalted their advantages, because they were the first to be "intrusted with the oracles of God." But they had not met their responsibilities. They committed great error in assuming that, since God had made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, they were permanently secure. A position of such assumed confidence was fatal, for "the judgment of God is according to the truth." "He will render to each according to his works." "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." God's judgment is impartial, as are also his kindness, forbearance, and patience. Pretensions and teachings must be consistent with daily conduct. It is not only what you do and how you do it that is important, but also, and at the same time, what you think and how you think it. On the day of judgment search will be made for the secret motives that have prompted actions. The purpose must have been genuine and sincere. He made practical illustrations of the principles he was seeking to stress by referring to circumcision, which was of such special importance to the Jews. He neither condemned circumcision (3: 1, 2) nor the Law, but he analyzed the meaning of each, emphasizing the symbolic significance of circumcision as an act of spiritual consecration, and the Law as an instrumentality to discover sin. "The real Jew is the man who is one inwardly, and real

circumcision is a matter of the heart—a spiritual, not a literal, thing.”

While Paul possessed rich religious endowment, he appraised the unwritten law of conscience in the heart of the heathen as of real value in attaining an upright life, and the law of Moses as truly helpful in making man conscious of sin. Therefore he placed both Gentile and Jew in consistent and advantageous position to strive for greater enlightenment, which is to be found through faith in Christ, revealing and exemplifying the righteousness of God. He was seeking to picture the sound comfort that comes with that intimate experience with God, by which such spiritual realities are enjoyed as produce a greater grip on truth and righteousness than either graven images or forms and ceremonies can create.

.

XXIII

THE LAW OF FAITH

(Romans 4-7)

"The whole course of things goes to teach us faith."
RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

PAUL's opposition to Judaism and Paganism is expressed in a fundamental attack upon the inadequacy of each to cope with the forces of evil in the world. He based his observations upon experience, which enabled him to estimate the insidious influences exercised by sin, in its pernicious and persistent operation against these two religions. Its resourceful and relentless methods had been working in subtle and destructive fashion everywhere Paul had been. He had seen the results of its activities in breaking through paganism and actually flourishing under its banner; and he had experienced its vile processes in his own heart while defending the doctrines and dogmas of Judaism. This brought him to the realization of the necessity of a daily program of life, which embodies a permanent defensive and a powerful offensive against sin—the foulest thing in the universe.

With definite conclusion that a way of living that would withstand the forces of iniquity and realize the maximum of the worth-while things of life could not be based upon the worship of idols, nor founded upon ritualistic observances, inspired by fear, he sought a more dependable source of strength and found it in that religious faculty called *faith*, which he proclaimed to be of supreme significance to every living creature. Paul conceived faith to be

more than confident belief in God, although that was fundamental; but in addition to intellectual assent there must be trust—a confident reliance upon that relation to God that comes from seeking his favor in leading a life of service based upon love, mercy, and faithfulness. He gave no concrete definition of faith, but as in his immortal chapter on love he defined it in terms of a sane and rational way of living, in which daily activities are impelled by a motive and desire to realize the full measure of the endowments which God has given to each individual, with perfect confidence that such a life was exemplified in Jesus Christ, not merely as an example, but as a revelation. He founds faith upon the same sense of conviction that forms the basis of his religious impulse, and through its operation the highest idealism is inspired. He emphasized faith as that “eternal power,” that distinctive quality or attribute, divine in its nature, which sustains and defends against all the forces of sin that continuously bombard upright living. He did not advocate faith as a theory, but as a fact to be experienced by every human being, which reality inevitably leads to a higher conception of service and a more glorious desire for that abundant life of “love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” To all of these attributes sin is a relentless enemy, against which every individual must be fortified. While faith as an attitude of mind is not confined to religious experience, it is in that sphere that its manifestations are most clearly expressed. Yet faith has inspired the intellectual progress of mankind. Man did not begin with knowledge; it was revealed to him by research, stimulated by confidence, carried forward by that magnetic pull that relies upon something more than visible material things. Science and faith are complementary, with the result that

the old hard-and-fast line of demarcation between the two has reached the vanishing point.

Paul had personally realized a mighty transforming and satisfying spiritual experience, which not only enabled him to throw off the shackles of sin, but, what was of even greater significance, brought him to the realization of the fundamental soundness of the truth he was proclaiming to the Romans. This transcendent religious conviction was a sudden revelation to Paul on the road to Damascus, since which time he had tested it in the fiercer fires of the most varied and severe trials the human mind could conceive. Any program of life must be subjected to the logic of reason and then to the test of experience. From such a standpoint Paul spoke of his faith with such certainty that he inspired interest. There was no element of doubt or misgiving or hesitation with him, but implicit and complete trust and confidence. This is why Paul was so sure of his position. Firmly established upon this basis, he proceeds further by urging a life by faith, in pure conscience, as not only working righteousness but resulting in eternal life. His confidence in faith was founded upon the belief that it was the sacred bond that links man to man and all humanity to God. He felt that by it "we are more than conquerors through him that loved us," and that through it the highest consummation of existence may be realized.

His drive against sin, with faith as the infallible sword and shield, was the only sure method to forestall the delusive and deceptive activities of evil, with its inveterate devices, constantly striving to filter into the mental processes and undermine good intentions, destroy holy purposes, and paralyze the will power of the individual. He was seeking to fortify the soul in a position of eternal sanity and strength.

There was a legalistic strain in the figures he used to illustrate the several aspects in which he presented the truth. He expressed redemption by the figure of emancipation of a slave from bondage, typifying Christian liberty. Justification was compared to acquittal of an accused person, whose innocence was declared when palliating circumstances justified it. Through the act of acquittal by divine grace the sinner is restored to the relationship toward God, which he would have sustained if he had not sinned—because his sins are pardoned. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Forgiveness from sin was likened unto God’s release of a debtor.

He recognized that “through the law is the knowledge of sin.” “But by the law of faith” is salvation attained, for Jesus is the great interpreter of God to man, who enabled man to realize a consciousness of fellowship with God. This spiritual experience he describes as coming through “faith in Christ.” The spirit of Love is proclaimed and exemplified in the Spirit of Christ, which binds men in loyal, devoted service to each other and to God. This spirit, which is essential to salvation, is maintained through faith in Christ.

It must be kept in mind that Paul had labored under the intrenched opposition of Judaism and paganism. His efforts had been intense and exciting, and he maintained a devoted interest amid all his discouragement. His faith was so fixed and his confidence so supreme that his courage never abated. Yet he well knew that his activities might cease at any time that his enemies found opportunity to destroy him. The utterly corrupt state of the pagans and the dominant spirit of hate amongst the Judaists were so foreign to the spirit of Christianity that Paul wanted

to record, in unmistakable declaration, the falsity of the one and the fallacy of the other, as a means of strength to maintain virtue and sustain righteousness. Naturally this intensified the opposition to him from those against whom he was driving such an effective attack.

The vicious degradation of Paganism and the insincere pretensions of Judaism constituted the evidence of his proof, and he was exposing both in fair but bold fashion.

The privileges of the Jews gave them moral preeminence over the heathen, therefore their responsibility was the greater. The Gentiles had violated the law of conscience, and the Jews, boasting of their law, failed to obey it; hence the failure of both in the sight of God.

Paul had profound respect for Jewish traditions and sincere reverence for their religion. He met the argument of the Jews by historical appeal in the Old Testament. "Abraham had faith in God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness" (4: 13). The promise to Abraham (Gen. 13: 15) and his seed, that they should inherit the land, came not by the law, but by the righteousness of faith. Thus God's way of uprightness was disclosed without any reference to the law, though the law and the prophets bear witness to it. The promise to Abraham, who was the first patriarch in Hebrew tradition, antedates the laws of Moses. His relation to God was based upon trust, confidence, faith, and that his seed should inherit the land was to result, not by the law, but by the righteousness of faith.

This was consistent with the fundamental idea, which Paul was proclaiming to the Romans, as to God's method of enabling men to attain and maintain righteousness; except that he brought it down to date, by declaring a new guide to right living, in the life of Jesus Christ, for all

who have faith in him. The dominant idea with Paul was to impress God's method of enabling men to live righteous lives. God's response to man's need for divine life is the gift of Jesus Christ, "unto all and upon all that believe."

The consequences of righteousness by faith, as he conceived it, are peace, joy, hope, which contribute to character-building, in that they reconcile man to his adversities and sorrows. Suffering gives steadfastness of endurance, and endurance evidences strength, which encourages hope and contributes to the enrichment of character.

Again Paul reverts to history for effective illustration by comparing the influence set in motion by Adam and Christ, with the observation that from the former came sin and death and from the latter righteousness and life. Christ was the representative of all mankind for salvation as Adam was for condemnation. This was all to emphasize the way of righteousness revealed by Jesus Christ. The Mosaic law of the Jews and the law of conscience of the Gentiles recognized sin, and the fate of transgression of duty in committing it, but there was wanting that essential religious faculty so essential to withstand and overcome all its evil influences, and therefore Paul reiterated that faith was the *sine qua non* of salvation.

.

XXIV

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT

(Romans 8)

"O God within my breast,
Almighty, ever-present Deity!
Life—that in me has rest,
As I—undying life—have power in Thee!
With wide-embracing love
The spirit animates eternal years,
Pervades and broods above,
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates, and rears.
Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.
There is no room for death
Nor atom that his might could render void:
Thou—THOU art Being and Breath,
And what THOU art may never be destroyed."

—EMILY BRONTE.

WHEN Paul declared to the Corinthians that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2: 10), he gave definite expression to the importance of thought in religion, and recognized that intelligent faith is required to meet the needs of progress. He had experienced a new connection with the "deep things of God," through the "power of the Spirit," near Damascus; and his keen and resourceful mind had tested that revelation in his continuous search for truth, under the guidance of this new light. He realized that holiness was a "virtue, rooted in the religious relation" to God, and maintained through spiritual power.

Mysticism was dominant in the various forms of paganism as well as the rites of Judaism, and the idea of "the Spirit" was a well-recognized, though vague, element in these religions. Their notions were so erroneous that Paul determined to clarify the situation. He followed his customary use of legalistic expressions and adopted this method to explain the operations of the Spirit, by declaring that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." In marshaling the powers of righteousness, under the forms of law, against the forces of evil, operating in similar order, he particularized the issues by asserting that the law of sin is served through yielding to the baser cravings of the flesh, while the law of the Spirit is observed by cultivating the finer aspirations of the mind. The one is lethargic and easy; the other dynamic and difficult. Paul placed high value on activity and effort and constantly called attention to the satisfaction that comes with righteous conduct. The reward for achievement, in overcoming degrading temptations, is the incomparable gratification of righteous victory. Freedom from the "law of sin" can be attained by exalting the "law of the Spirit." The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." In warning against the dangers that beset every individual, estimate is made of the ultimate results of the choice between good and evil. "To be carnally minded is death: but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

Paul rejoiced in everything that magnifies life in its highest significance. He was not so much concerned with theological dogmas as with life, since he was more of a counselor to conduct than a teacher of doctrine. His power to estimate life values has never been surpassed.

As evidence of this difficult and successful accomplishment we find more people placing real reliance upon his exegeses as to fundamental principles than upon those of any other religious teacher since his day. The fountain of his joy of living was his reliance upon the "law of the Spirit," which enabled him to sustain courage for extraordinary physical sacrifice and suffering. His superb attitude of confidence in his motive and purpose of life, guided by the "law of the Spirit," is the supreme guide to his way of living. He makes plain that God "condemned sin in the flesh" and fortified against it by providing "the law of the Spirit," exemplified in the life of Christ, leaving men free to accept or reject this protecting influence. By reason of this freedom Paul's mission was to point out the difference and make clear the distinction between a life governed by the passions of the flesh and one inspired by spiritual ideals. He carries the argument further in showing that the "carnal mind is enmity against God," because "it is not subject to the law of God," hence cannot please him; and concludes with a call of confidence, in which he urges each individual to permit the Spirit of God to dwell in him. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God," and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. His confidence in the reward of righteousness is expressed by the assurance that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

The foundation of the "law of the Spirit" is love, as proclaimed and exemplified by Jesus Christ, holding mankind in loyal, devoted, self-sacrificing service. The ultimate result of the operation of this law is a social system, resulting from a natural synthesis of the ideal, exemplified in Christ, and the practical problems of daily life.

Paul was not only seeking a true life, but a sure way to maintain it. Our destiny depends upon our ability to withstand the debasing tyranny of sin by resolutely living under the dominion of the Spirit, which daily reënforces generous motives, high purposes, and holy determinations. The letter to the Romans was a studied appeal for a way of living that would make this a better world, with eternal security for future glory. In his manifold suffering no distress so depressed Paul as the withering influences of sin which he met everywhere, degrading communities, debauching individuals, and destroying the social fiber of the world. His experience confirmed his faith that these influences could be successfully combated through the way of living taught by Jesus Christ.

Paul was seeking to effect a real change in the hearts of men everywhere. "Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5: 16), not for reward nor to avoid punishment, but for the supreme satisfaction that comes from right living. The religious needs of mankind should not be based upon the hope of reward nor the fear of punishment (although he called attention to both), but upon a finer appeal to a higher purpose, to embrace God's gospel, from a primary choice of right living and for the genuine satisfaction it gives in this life. In this exalted conception of the spirit over the flesh, there is no room for the libertinism of paganism nor the legalism of Judaism. Paul had found the "power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1: 24), through which a true conception of God is made possible. The master motive which prompted and dominated the ideas expressed in the letter to the Romans was the supremacy of Jesus Christ above every man-spirit that ever walked the earth. In recognition of Christ as the Wisdom and Power of God, he wrote this letter to the Romans, which

was in fact a message to the whole world. Obsessed with this conviction, and by his faith in the supreme importance that Christ's message was sufficient for all mankind, for all time, he commanded all his resources to make clear and convincing his faith in Christ. Paul was ever alive and alert to his environment, and he bases his teaching upon experience, varied to be sure, and by reason thereof he had a broader view of human relationships and a more comprehensive idea of God. While he realized that he could never comprehend God, yet he believed that there was a divine plan for the universe, which somehow included in its purpose his own creation and that of every other human being. This divine plan as to each individual could only be understood by attuning one's self to God, which was not a physical process, but a spiritual experience, quite beyond material regulations. Yet there are elements of law and order in this spiritual relation. It is not haphazard or accidental. It is as regular as any of God's efforts and the most important of all to man. The power of God is revealed in the love of Christ in a more marvelous and effective way than any other manifestation of his Omnipotence, so far as the individual is concerned, for it reveals a plan of eternal life and immortal happiness for the finest object of his creation. The law of the Spirit operates through Christ as the controlling influence in the law of life. "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the Spirit of Christ in possession of the individual that makes him spiritual. Paul's supreme concern was to emphasize man's conscious attitude toward God, as an invisible spirit that not only manifests its power in the systematic operation of the forces of the universe, but speaks to the individual through the silent influences of

conscience, inspiration, joy, and the realization of a definite purpose of life through the operation of the law of faith. He had confidence that God will reveal himself to every human being who attunes himself to his Spirit. He was a great advocate of prayer, a spiritual experience of supreme importance which he practiced constantly. This was the way he sought to partake of the divine nature, and it confirmed his belief that God was the source of his peace, power, hope, love, and joy. Paul felt that the "law of the Spirit" was the only power that could maintain mankind from the ruinous influences of sin. He lived close to God and sought close fellowship with his fellow men, urging that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law."

The Spirit in Christ was to Paul the power of God, hence "through him we are more than conquerors." His high estimate is expressed in the inspiring declaration, "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The end of religion is to know God and realize a bond of fellowship with him. Knowledge is relative and imperfect. "We know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away."

.

XXV

LOYALTY TO LINEAGE

(Romans 9-11)

"Let all the ends thou aim'st at be thy country's, thy God's, and truth's."—SHAKESPEARE.

LOYALTY is a noble virtue, outstanding and effective, when accompanied with sincerity and strength. It is the highest expression of confidence, faith, and love, and a true test of character and caliber. The least respected person is one who is disloyal to a friend; the most despised individual is he who is disloyal to his people—traitor to his country. Loyalty varies in quality in that it is not always of the superlative degree. It is founded upon a spirit of self-sacrifice and genuine regard for the interests and welfare of others. There are many self-centered people, possessing ability and ambition necessary to success, who have no appreciation of the elements of loyalty and unconsciously lead the shirking life of a "slacker." Paul's gracious spirit of service and generous love for his fellow men qualified him, with rare background, to exercise all the functions of loyalty. In light of his numerous acts of courage, sacrifice, and faith, full significance must be given to his sorrowful declaration that, "*I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh*" (9: 3).

Paul had expressed his appreciation of the advantages of the Jews by declaring that "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (3: 2), and that they had "received the spirit of adoption." That he had the highest respect for

their traditions is evidenced by the recognition he gave to their prerogatives: (a) the "giving of the law," (b) the temple "service of God," and (c) "the promises" (9: 4). The "fathers," Abraham, Moses, David, and Isaiah, were true heroes with him, and he believed that "of them as concerning the flesh Christ came."

Although Paul had broken with the Jewish Church and had championed the cause of Christianity, for which he had on five occasions suffered the maximum number of thirty-nine cruel lashes, from vigilant officers of Jewish tribunals, when wild fanaticism was raging like a consuming fire, kindling hatred and revenge against him among those whom he called "my brothers," yet his serene mind never wavered from its determined purpose and devout conviction. It required a lofty and heroic spirit to hold steadfast under conditions of such fierce and persistent opposition. But his work had covered a large scope of study, sacrifice, and suffering, in which he had traversed a wide range of religious experience, and from which he had reached the firm conclusion that the truth revealed in Christ meets all the requirements of God and man. The staggering thought that bewildered him was that the chosen Jewish nation—his people—did not realize the truth of God that came through Christ. If he had not regarded the Jews as a great people, his remorse would have been less keen. The free and unrestricted channels through which this divine revelation was flowing were being ignored by the Jews, while the Gentiles were displaying wisdom in embracing the opportunities of enlightenment which it offered. The "great heaviness and continued sorrow" for Israel was so dominant in the heart of Paul that he was willing to make the largest conceivable sacrifice for its redemption.

It would not be fair to intimate that the spirit of loyalty was not a Jewish attribute. When Moses returned from Mount Sinai and found his people had melted their jewels into a golden calf, which they were worshiping, his anger was followed by anguish. He asked the Lord to forgive their sin, and if not, he implored, "blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exod. 32: 32). But Paul's sorrow was "continual" and his declaration was more deliberate and significant than that of Moses, even though it was construed as an extravagant exclamation of consuming love rather than a practical offer of sacrifice. His pronouncement was intended as the most emphatic expression of loyalty that language could declare. Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed of the University of Chicago translates Paul's words as, "I could wish myself accursed and *cut off* from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my natural kindred." Many times are these words epitomized in modern times to describe loyalty in emphatic phrase. To say of a man that "he would go to hell for a friend" is construed as a complimentary expression of unquestioned loyalty. Paul's declaration meant nothing less than this extravagant suggestion of sacrifice.

That Paul had genuine loyalty for the Jews is evidenced in many statements and activities. In his ministry, he ever put the Jew first. He declared that the "gospel of Christ is the power of God unto everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (1: 16). In Romans (2: 9, 10) he made the Jew first in condemnation as well as glorification. On his missionary journeys he first sought the Jewish synagogues as the place in which he preferred to proclaim the gospel. His own people were uppermost in his mind at all times, and no one can question the sincerity of his grief that Israel refused her

Saviour and was thereby losing her heritage. No Jew should ever hate Paul. Like Stephen (who was also a Jew), he prayed for them while they were his active enemies. Although he was engaged in stern conflict to subdue the same spirit of fanaticism and bigotry that he had himself encouraged in the cruel death of that sainted martyr, his concern for his people could never be questioned. The sublime spirit of Stephen was a powerful influence with Paul, as indeed with all who have ever contemplated it.

Paul made it perfectly clear that the situation as to the rejection of Christ by the Jews was not because God's word had failed. He laid the responsibility on Israel and never lost hope of her ultimate restoration and salvation. He sought solace in historical references, that "not all are Israel who are of Israel": (a) Abraham had two sons, but only one received the promise; (b) again, "as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Mal. 1: 2, 3); (c) even Moses stood in God's presence, subject to the same selective process, for God said to him, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not to him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (9: 15, 16). In his desperation, he compared the Creator to the potter who, with the same clay, makes "one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor"; and sought comfort in the prophecy of Isaiah that, "though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." And he refers to the extreme case of Pharaoh, where God deliberately raised up a person who by his hardness of heart might serve as a warning to others. The theological doctrine of predestination has substantial support in Paul's lamentations for Israel.

But he finally declared that Israel failed to attain righteousness, "because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." This return to the Christian point of view, from his wanderings in his mental anguish, was a truly fine conception of God's providential dealings, in recognizing him as a Father, with love for all his children, created in his own image, each for some wise purpose. Christianity is never fatalistic. Possibly Paul's desperate desire to subdue Jewish arrogance prompted him to make such appeal, for he had a consuming desire to save the Jews. Aside from his theoretical purpose in these historical references, his genuine love for the people of his lineage is shown in his fiery confessions of anxiety and grief. His heart's supreme desire and prayer to God for Israel was for its salvation. He questioned whether God, perhaps, had cast aside his people, and it weighed heavily upon his heart.

He felt that the Jews had a "zeal for God" (10: 2), but that it was not supported with intelligent devotion. They were obsessed with the traditions of the law, and he told them that Christ marked the termination of the law as a means to salvation. He meant to meet the Jewish idea of righteousness as the outward obedience to certain legal enactments, with the Christian conception of inward faith in the heart, prompting every purpose and action.

There was no excuse of ignorance for Israel. The teachings of Christ were but the natural religion sung by the Psalmist (Psalm 19), and he declared that Christ's sayings had gone "into all the earth and their words unto the end of the world" (10: 18), and finally he quotes the words of Isaiah, who had said to Israel, "All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gain-saying people" (10: 21). Paul felt that the privileged

Jew had utterly failed to appreciate the blessings offered him, and therefore was under divine condemnation; while the ignorant barbarian, through the natural call of conscience, had come into the presence of God. No further special privilege was assured to Israel, no further covenant relationship with God; but the individual member of the house of Israel had the same opportunity for salvation as any other creature.

Paul could not bring himself to believe that God had rejected Israel, for he himself was of the "seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (11: 1); and he had been brought to a saving knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ. While the nation had rejected Christ, his grace still goes out to the individual.

Having considered God's dealings with Israel in the past, he takes up the future relationship. In magnifying his office as an apostle to the Gentiles he was even willing to provoke his people to jealousy that he "might save some of them" (11: 14). He used the parable of the two olive trees—one good and the other bad—to illustrate the transmission, by grafting, of the branches from the bad tree (the Gentiles) to the good tree (Israel in relationship with God through his covenants with Abraham). The grafted-in branches represented the Gentile Christians. The warning to the Gentiles against boasting (11: 18) was to impress upon them their responsibility, which Israel had failed to heed.

He was seeking to work out, through intellectual processes, the solution of the problem of Israel's salvation at some future date. Without reaching any logical conclusion, but prompted by the undaunted enthusiasm of his faith and the sublime hope for his people, he finally declared that "all Israel shall be saved" (11: 26). His heart

was always attuned to prayer—indeed filled with praise and worship of the divine plan of salvation, which he prayed would include his people. He thoroughly appreciated the extraordinary endowments of the Jewish race and was earnest in his endeavor to bring this worthy and worth-while people into his spirit and purpose of the religion of Christ, which he so confidently believed was to redeem the world.

Since he did not reach an entirely logical and satisfactory conclusion, he proclaimed: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

XXVI

CHRISTIAN OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Romans 12-15)

"Our healing is not in the storm or in the whirlwind; it is not in monarchies, or aristocracies, or democracies, but will be revealed by the still small voice that speaks to the conscience and the heart, prompting us to wider and wiser humanity."—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

PAUL's life was so dynamic and determined that he laid great stress upon capacity for action—ability for effective service. No word in his writings is more characteristic than "power," which he uses many times in his search for the essential elements of righteous conduct. He finds that the conditions precedent to effective exercise of power are a clean heart and an upright spirit. The true criterion of character is the motive governing the purpose of life, behind the use of power. Paul believed in the real power of the gospel which he preached (1: 16), because it was the Spirit of Christ (1 Cor. 5: 4). "For the kingdom of God is not in words, but in power" (1 Cor. 5: 20). He had confidence in the power of the work of faith (2 Thess. 1: 11) and ordered his daily life accordingly. In his high valuation of faith, in the supremacy he gave to the law of the spirit as an effective power to combat sin, and in the superlative loyalty he expressed for his people, he was seeking to emphasize the elements essential to establish the righteousness of God in the heart of the individual. The real theme of the Epistle to the Romans is the gospel of

God for the salvation of man. From his doctrinal discussion he deduces important practical lessons which make this the most comprehensive of all his contributions to Christian literature. Coleridge declared it the most profound book in existence; and Martin Luther pronounced it "the purest gospel." The driving power of Paul, manifest in his opposition to Pagan fetishism and Jewish dogmatism, found its finest expression in constructive admonition of the daily responsibilities and personal obligations of every human being. To meet these requirements Paul taught that every Christian must recognize his personal duty to God (12: 1-7), to the government (13: 1-7), and to his fellow men (14: 1-23).

He encompasses all these duties under the service of Christian love, which requires due regard not only for the rights but for the welfare of others. In his devoted service to his fellow men Paul revealed the marvelous power of the righteousness of God in the depth and purity of his own soul.

It is not strange that his service in founding Christian communities had enlarged his missionary vision, which resulted in an ambition to go to Spain. But with this desire for a larger field of service, his anxiety that his converts hold steadfast to the faith led him to impress upon them that the unit of salvation is the individual, and that the redemption of society depends upon the recognition of personal duty and responsibility. This was so consistent with his own example of self-sacrifice that his message was calculated to carry confidence and conviction to all who knew his work and read his word. To him Christian service did not consist merely in the secret exercises of the heart, but in continuous and constructive activity. His purpose was to make a comprehensive survey of the entire

reach of religious interest and influence, and to crystallize the results into practical and convincing instruction. In covering the field of personal contact—religious, social, and political—he evidently had in mind a program of individual activity, applicable to a highly developed and complex society, such as we have to-day.

After preliminaries of what he terms “reasonable service,” he follows with the initial exhortation, “Let love be without hypocrisy” (12: 9), and he makes an estimate of the meaning of love in practical application to the individual in his relation to society. In this evaluation he finds, as a result of the operation of love, as he directs, that there is genuine deference of the individual in his social relations, which is not only expressed in patience and sympathy, but in benevolence to foe as well as friend. He finds it indispensably necessary to right living, which comprehends all the elements of goodness. This is not inconsistent with diligence in business, which is a practical necessity, recognized by Paul as a Christian virtue, based upon his idea of service. It took the world a long time to recognize the economic principle that business is based upon reciprocal service; but that idea is prominent in the policies of every legitimate business enterprise in the world to-day. The keynote of modern business is service. Competition in industry to-day is based upon better service.

Paul realized that conceit and ambition are dangerous influences that operate in insidious ways with those who are possessed with power, whether natural or artificial, just as envy and jealousy are often besetting sins with those of inferior station or endowments. He condemns conceit as a vice, and leaves no place for him who assumes a fancied superiority over those around him.

The authority of government must be respected, because

it is a necessity in administering principles of justice. "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God" (13: 2). "Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (13: 7). In recognizing duty to civil authority as a Christian virtue, Paul gives to government real support of citizenship, as essential to permanent progress, which must take into consideration that as population becomes more dense the problems of society become more intense; hence the necessity for governmental support. What far-reaching results would follow the universal recognition of the payment of taxes as a duty due the government. There is no escape from the logic of Paul's admonition. It must be remembered that when he gave this instruction the taxgatherer was universally despised. But it can hardly be concluded that his approval was meant for high-handed habits of officials who failed to observe methods of fair-dealing in the performance of their duties. Paul had reference to the institution of human government, not the personnel. He made love of fellow men, loyalty to government, and service to both, the practical principles for that perfect community which he hoped would ultimately include all mankind. Again he swung from the analytical to the syncretical, in applying ideal Christian virtues to practical daily duties, to the end that a social system might result that would reconcile disparities of men of high and low estate. He was seeking to show that the Christian religion is adapted to all states of society and all progressive forms of government, and concluded his estimate of the operation of this ideal force among men with the declaration that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (13: 10). Thus

the gospel of Christ is epitomized in daily life as the law of love.

In carrying this principle to the more difficult application of the wide disparity in the endowments of men, Paul realized that for "the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak" required an exercise of love that furnished the true test of Christian character. To exercise diligence and zeal for others, without emolument or hope of material return, was the final subject which he enjoined, even to the extent of giving consideration to their erroneous scruples about indifferent things, such as eating and daily observances. "For none of us liveth to himself" (14: 7). These restraints upon Christian liberty were for the sake of exercising wholesome influence upon those who might take offense and be alienated from enlightenment, if their superficial foibles were ignored. Here again there is a limit to deference to another's ignorant notions and customs. Every one should endeavor to promote sane ideas of duty and conduct, even at the sacrifice of being criticized and misunderstood. The Saviour was accused of breaking the Sabbath by a fanatical element (John 5: 16), and was also charged with being "a winebibber and a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11: 19).

Paul admonished that, at bottom, there must be sincere motives, which he felt could only be maintained through genuine religious conviction. In recognizing a practical concept of religion, involving obligations and responsibilities, he realized that divine question, which searches the heart of every individual, "What is your purpose?"

Good citizenship is a natural and necessary consequence of consistent Christian living. Man's duty to his fellow man is as fundamental in religion as it is essential to the peace and happiness of every community. The social re-

quirements of the decalogue of Moses can best be observed in recognizing the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (13: 9), which Paul figuratively described as casting off the works of darkness and putting on the armor of light (13: 12).

While the Epistle to the Romans was addressed to a community that had not been visited by Paul, he knew many people in the Capital City to whom he referred in confident and affectionate terms. He was writing for all men for all time, and clearly intended to lay down principles which he felt, both in theory and in practice, would stand the test of time; and indeed he has furnished the background for doctrinal discussion, as well as the foundation for practical religion, which has challenged the interests and needs of changing civilizations through the centuries.

.

XXVII

FEARLESS RESPONSE TO CALL OF DUTY

(Acts 20, 21)

"The simple duty that awaits thy hand
Is God's voice uttering a divine command."

—MINOT J. SAVAGE.

PAUL selected Phœbe, deaconess of a local church near Corinth, to deliver, in person, to the Christians at Rome, the communication addressed to them, which is now known as the Epistle to the Romans. He then arranged passage direct to Syria, that he might reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover. While he was under sixty years of age, he was worn by toil and torture, and presented a striking object of sympathy to those who sincerely sought to dissuade him from returning to the Holy City at a time when Jews would gather from all those places where he had declared his message and aroused their resentment. Despite the occasion for misgiving and apprehension, Paul was determined to see the contributions from the Gentiles distributed to the Christian Jews at Jerusalem.

Although Jewish hostility had been a constant menace to him for years, he did not seem concerned with any immediate danger, as he arranged to sail on a pilgrim ship, carrying Achaian and Asian Jews to the Passover. When he was about to sail he learned of a plot laid against him by his prospective fellow passengers; and realizing how easy it would be for them to destroy him on the high sea, he escaped their conspiracy by taking the land route through Macedonia to Philippi. We observed, in his first

letter to the Corinthians (16: 3), that he had in mind special representatives to carry the contributions to Jerusalem; and while the names of the seven delegates (20: 4) do not in themselves indicate financial trustworthiness, they were doubtless the convoys for the collections that had been gathered from the Gentiles in Macedonia, Galatia, and Asia.

Luke joined Paul at Philippi, and the official carriers of the contributions met them at Assos, whence they sailed, with frequent stops, to Miletus, where the Apostle to the Gentiles summoned his faithful friends, the elders of Ephesus, for a farewell message.

Pentecost was some fifty days after the beginning of Passover, and Paul was anxious to reach Jerusalem in time for this feast, which he would have been unable to do had he gone by Ephesus. Pentecost was originally "the feast of harvest, the first fruits of labor, . . . and the feast of ingathering" (Exod. 23: 16), hence an appropriate occasion for bringing contributions to the Jewish Christians.

Paul's address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus is the third of the fragments of his sermons preserved by Luke. While they are all abbreviated and necessarily omit much detail, the substance, no doubt, is the same as delivered by the Apostle. His address to the elders from the Asiatic capital was a pathetic speech, showing depressed spirit, but it was intended primarily as an intimate farewell message and reveals deep affection and an ambitious personal interest. Paul was possibly talking to men of humble status; however, his appreciation of his fellow men was not dependent upon their social or financial position. He was always possessed of democratic disposition, with a stout heart, and he wanted to strengthen the courage of these

men for the trying conflicts which he felt awaited them. He recalled the trials and plots which had threatened him while at Ephesus, and reminded them how he had publicly taught everything that would help to strengthen their faith in Christ. That he was apprehensive of danger ahead may be inferred from his statement that he did not know what was in wait for him at Jerusalem. But his determination was undaunted and he declared that "I set everything at naught, nor do I count my life precious to me, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Paul was ever alert and on guard, and it was natural for him to warn them against "grievous wolves" and deserters.

In his final admonition he recalls the words of Christ—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"—which furnished him inspiration on his mission to contribute to the poor saints at Jerusalem.

After an affectionate farewell to the Ephesian elders, Paul and his companions continued along the coast of Asia Minor to its southwestern extremity, and thence to Tyre, where he was again warned not to go to Jerusalem; but they proceeded to Cæsarea, where the voyage ended. Here Paul was the guest of Philip, the evangelist and early missionary, whose four daughters were possessed with the gift of prophecy. The prophet Agabus had returned from Jerusalem and knew the tremendous resentment of the Judaists because of the success of Paul's missionary work, which had been reported by the pilgrims to the Holy City. In warning the missionary of the prejudice that threatened him at the end of his journey, he illustrated his prediction of Paul's imprisonment, if he proceeded thence, by taking the Apostle's girdle and binding his own hands and feet,

and while thus fettered he declared, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles." So impressed were the bystanders, including his fellow travelers, that they all besought him not to go to Jerusalem; to which Paul, with perfect resignation, replied, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (21: 13); which reconciled them to his attitude, that "the will of the Lord be done."

Accompanied by certain of the disciples of Cæsarea, the party went to Jerusalem where Paul was the guest of Mnason, an early convert, from the island of Cyprus. At the first conference with the disciples, held the second day after their arrival, all the dangers, predicted by friends *en route*, were confirmed. While they received him graciously and were grateful for the contributions, they spent little time in expressions of appreciation, personal or material, for they realized the peril in which Paul would be placed as soon as it was known that he was in the city. There were thousands of Jews there, "zealous of the law" of Moses (21: 20), who had been informed of Paul's teachings to the Gentiles, that it was not necessary to circumcise their children or to observe the old customs of the Hebrews.

The reports of the activity and success of Paul had made them more fanatical and turbulent than ever, and conditions were so tense that it was feared even slight agitation would incite a riot. The gravity of the situation was evidenced by the elder's imperative request that Paul undergo the rites of purification, with four others who were under the vow. Realizing that reports of Paul's success had become widespread, they hoped that such expression of at-

tachment to a time-honored Jewish custom might conciliate the opposition. In acceding to their request, Paul practiced the methods which he had declared in his letter to the Romans (14: 19), to make concessions to the scruples of others.

In his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 9: 22) he said: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

It would be error to infer from Paul's acquiescence in this religious observance that he, in the least manner, meant to deny or surrender that Christian faith and liberty which he had so stoutly proclaimed. These ceremonials were to him of no serious significance. He had performed a vow on a former occasion (Acts 18: 18) as an act of diplomacy to maintain friendly relations. While he appreciated the significance of these ritualistic observances to the Jews, yet to him personally they were largely a matter of indifference, and therefore he was not compromising his convictions in such an act of expediency to pacify his critics. His attitude was expressed in Romans 14: 19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Paul had never condemned the Hebrew observances, but had placed them in a subordinate position. In this he was consistent with the example of Christ, when he said to the leper whom he had healed: "Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them" (Mark 1: 44).

Ceremonials were of so much greater importance then than now, that we can only appreciate their full meaning to the Jews by bearing in mind that they were legalized, ritualized, and standardized in accordance with the sacred-

ness of a traditional reverence of supreme significance to them. Therefore when James and the other elders directed Paul to join the four men under vow, and defray the expense of all in going through the rites of purification, they were justified in believing that this observance would pacify the tumultuous spirit that was then so threatening.

But their well-laid plans, conceived in their anxiety to gratify this smoldering sentiment, were a grievous failure. This rite required seven days, and before the ceremony was consummated the Jews from Asia, having seen Paul on the street with Trophimus of Ephesus, were not surprised when they caught sight of him in the Temple, and, assuming that he was guilty of the intolerable desecration of bringing the uncircumcised Ephesian with him, they raised the hue and cry: "Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place" (21: 28). The alarm was effective. The spirit of riot spread rapidly through the city (21: 30), and inflamed the mob to seize Paul and drag him out of the Temple. A wild tumult ensued, and when the doors of the Temple had been shut "they went about to kill him" (21: 31).

Claudius Lysias, a Greek who had purchased his Roman citizenship, was the officer in charge of the cohort at Jerusalem, whose business it was to maintain peace under the authority of the Roman Empire. He immediately rushed soldiers and centurions to the scene of uproar and arrived just in time to save Paul from brutal murder under the blows of a furious mob. After having each hand chained to a soldier, he was ordered to the adjacent barracks of Fort Antonia. Again Paul was a Roman prisoner, surrounded by Roman soldiers, furnishing protection from an infuriated mob that was crying, "Away with him, kill him!"

The sound was familiar to the prisoner, from personal experience and observation. It was the same spirit and clamor that pursued Stephen in that immediate vicinity a quarter of a century before. Paul now possessed the spirit of Stephen, with a degree of tranquillity quite as powerful as the fury of the mob which he led against the sainted martyr on the former occasion. He now craved opportunity to address the frantic fanatics, so great was his confidence and courage in the convictions that dominated him. He could hardly have hoped to excel Stephen in speech, or otherwise to accomplish more, for the spirit of relentless hate had not abated during the intervening years since the martyred saint had suffered such cruel punishment at the hands of a heartless mob.

XXVIII

SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE THE HEBREW COURT

(Acts 22, 23)

"Brethren and fathers, hear ye my defense which I make unto you. I am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day."—ACTS 22: 1, 3.

CLAUDIUS LYSIAS was greatly perplexed by the clamor and confusion of the howling and surging crowd, which threatened his prisoner, as his soldiers were conveying him from the Temple to the fortress of Antonia for protection. He assumed that such a demonstration must have been produced by the capture of the Egyptian, who, some time before, had created great consternation in that section, by terrorizing the people with a band of four thousand assassins, which he assembled and marched into the wilderness. His suspicion was relieved, however, when Paul, speaking to him in Greek, his native tongue, requested permission to address the furious mob which threatened him. When the request was granted by Lysias, the battered missionary ascended the elevation afforded by the stairway to the barracks, and in some way temporarily quieted the boisterous throng, while he addressed them in Hebrew, as "brethren and fathers," asking that they hear his defense. In that raving throng were representatives from Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia, who had interchanged reports of the success of Paul's mission in their several communities. This information, from the many places visited

by the missionary, was calculated to stir the smoldering disappointment and resentment of the pilgrims to this celebration, to more clamorous activity than would otherwise have been aroused.

The speech which Paul delivered is the fourth fragment of his speeches preserved by Luke (Acts 22: 1-21). In it he recalled his Jewish origin in Tarsus, his training at the feet of Gamaliel (according to the strict manner of the law of the fathers), his intolerant persecution of those who accepted the teachings of Jesus, and his authority from their high priest to bring the followers of Christ from Damascus to Jerusalem to be punished—all of which, he thought, would make sufficient impression to enable him to hold their attention long enough to recount the marvelous revelation that came to him on the highway as he approached that ancient Syrian city. He was endeavoring to make them understand that nothing short of irresistible truth would have revolutionized his attitude toward God and man. After recounting, with considerable detail, his journey to Damascus, he proceeded with the account of his experience in the Temple, near where he was then standing, when in a vision the Lord warned him to make haste and depart quickly from Jerusalem, for his own safety; to which he had made answer that the Jews there knew of his persistent persecution of men and women who had professed Christ, and his participation in the execution of Stephen, under the judgment of the Jewish Sanhedrin. But when he followed this with the account of the Lord's command that he depart at once from Jerusalem, with the promise of a commission to the Gentiles, the mob spirit again broke loose with vociferous demonstration, shouting, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live" (Acts 22: 22).

The furious acclaim of wild shouting was accompanied by physical demonstration of throwing their clothes about them and flinging dust in the air. The display of ugly hate was so fierce that Claudius Lysias ordered Paul to be brought into the barracks, and gave direction that he be examined with torture in order to elicit a confession. The order was being executed and the prisoner's body was stretched out to receive the excruciating lashes that would lacerate the scars of five former scourgings, when he looked up at the centurion, standing by, and said, "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?" This inquiry involved a Roman law that was scrupulously respected, and Claudius Lysias was immediately called. While the Romans tolerated the practice of scourging among the Jews as a method of forcing a confession, such duress was forbidden in dealing with a Roman citizen. Claudius Lysias responded quickly and asked, "Art thou a Roman?" When Paul answered in the affirmative, the commandant replied, "I paid great price for Roman citizenship." With confidence, and possibly a degree of pride, Paul stated: "I was born a Roman." That was sufficient for his immediate release, under the Roman law; but it left Claudius Lysias in a frame of mind in which alarm (that he had bound a Roman) was mixed with uncertainty as to what he should do with his prisoner, in the light of the turbulent agitation against him in the city. He decided to pass the responsibility to the Jewish court—the Great Sanhedrin—the same tribunal that had condemned Jesus of Nazareth and Stephen. When Paul was brought before this high court, he knew full well the temper of the judges whom he faced. The inference has been drawn by some that he was, years before, a member of that court. Doubtless many of its members had been students

with him at the university under the instruction of Gamaliel, and others in the persecution of the Christians.

Looking straight into their eyes, he said: "Brothers, I have done my duty to God with a perfectly clear conscience up to this very day." This courageous and uncompromising declaration outraged the high priest, Ananias, who commanded those who stood near the prisoner to strike him in the mouth. There is no greater insult than to slap a man's face, and this one met quick resentment. Paul said: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and then in defiance of the law dost thou command me to be struck?" This provoked the reproof of a bystander, who said, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" Paul was quick to realize his mistake and the immediate danger to which he was exposed by reason of the resentment his remark had aroused. He knew from actual experience the intolerance that dominated their attitude toward all Christians. He had personally experienced the same mental processes that now actuated them. Not only did he know the temper of that tribunal, but he knew the deep-seated prejudice behind it all, that would prejudge him, if he were brought to trial; and he was there at the order of a wavering representative of the Roman government, whose prisoner he was and whose authority was supreme. If they were in the Hall of Hewn Stone, the regular meeting place of the court, no Roman officer, as such, was allowed in that sanctum; and if perchance any were there, it was only by sufferance, and hence Roman protection was not certain. Never did a man face impending peril with clearer realization of the necessity for immediate and decisive action. The court had doubtless been taken by surprise, or a definite procedure would therefore have been arranged for a speedy trial and positive

judgment. But they were experienced and resourceful, and it would not take long to map out a course, therefore Paul realized that he was face to face with the same doom that had confronted Stephen some twenty-five years before, but still fresh in the mind of the prisoner. Able and experienced as he was, he knew he could not make a more powerful argument than Stephen had made, when on trial before that tribunal (Acts 7). He well remembered how futile that appeal had been, and he realized how useless it would be to pursue such tactics. But he had to act promptly or submit to brutal death. Indeed he realized, from the order that had just been given by the chief of the Sanhedrin, that his defense before the Jews had failed to convince them, and that they would not even give him a chance to speak, as was given to Stephen; and he also knew that it would be useless for him to attempt to make an appeal to reason or justice or conscience. His mind was alert, and he quickly conceived that his only chance to attract their attention was by an appeal to prejudice, which was the dominant spirit of the members of that high court.

In no form was this vile spirit more manifest than in the reciprocal hatred of Pharisees and Sadducees—subtle, deep-seated, and intolerant; and Paul knew that the judges were comprised of these rival sects in somewhat proportionate numbers. His surest avenue of escape was to inflame the members of the court by an appeal to this prejudice. To that end he made bold declaration: "Brethren, I am a Pharisee and all my forefathers were Pharisees. It is for the hope of the resurrection of the dead that I am to be judged this day."

The appeal was a perfect piece of strategy. The jealousy was instantly inflamed, and the judgment hall became

a scene of wild clamor. Judicial dignity surrendered to jealous rage, bitter and violent. The dispute became so boisterous that Claudius Lysias heard the clamor, and, fearing that the safety of Paul was imperiled, again ordered him brought to the soldiers' quarters in the fortress. The Jews did not realize the artful subterfuge that had been employed in arousing the fiery animosity between the members of these jealous sects of the Great Sanhedrin, until their victim had gone.

When the escape became known, a conspiracy was formed of more than forty members, who entered into a solemn compact, and bound themselves with an oath, that they would not eat nor drink until they had killed the despised missionary. Members of the Sanhedrin approved the machination, to which they added a treacherous scheme—to ask the Roman commandant that Paul be brought before the Sanhedrin for further and more careful investigation. The assassins were to lie in wait and murder the prisoner on his way from the fortress to the court room in the Temple. But the secrets of a conspiracy are always subject to treachery, and through some mischance the son of Paul's sister, who lived at Jerusalem, heard of the plot and hastened to advise his uncle, who sent him to Claudius Lysias. The message was eagerly received and deeply appreciated by the Roman officer, who cautioned the youth not to tell any one that he had divulged the information. With prudent and prompt action, Claudius Lysias ordered his centurion to have in readiness, that night, two hundred of the legionary soldiers, seventy cavalymen, and two hundred swordsmen, to protect this Roman citizen from the maddening assassins, while he was being transported to Cæsarea, with an official message to the Roman procurator of Judea, relative to the mob, the Great San-

hedrin, and the murderous plot. The heavy guard, which was ordered to accompany this Roman citizen-prisoner, evidenced fear of the temper of the people at Jerusalem and surrounding country. Under cover of night these four hundred and seventy soldiers conducted the prisoner from the scene of plotting Jewish enemies, with the objective of further investigation and trial by a Roman court, over which Antonius Felix presided, at Cæsarea.

XXIX

SELF-DEFENSE BEFORE THE ROMAN COURT

(Acts 24-26)

"Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended anything at all."—Acts 25: 8.

CÆSAREA suggests scenes of passing interest in the early history of Christianity. It had been rebuilt and beautified by the masterful and merciless Herod the Great three-quarters of a century before Paul was taken there as a Roman prisoner, and, according to Tacitus, was the metropolis of Judea. It was named in honor of Augustus Cæsar, to whom a temple was builded, visible far out to sea, containing a colossal statue of the Emperor. Josephus describes it ("Antiquities of the Jews," XV, 9, 6) as a city of palaces, temples, amphitheater, and hippodrome, of gorgeous architectural beauty, with a harbor "free always from the waves of the sea." Here Herod, after profligate celebration of his extraordinary building achievement, condemned to death his two sons; here Pontius Pilate ordered a massacre of recalcitrant Jews, who were imploring him to remove from Jerusalem the profane eagle standards and images of the emperor, only to recall his order when his victims had bared their necks for the assassin's ax; and here Herod Agrippa I met tragic death amid scenes of haughty splendor (Acts 12: 20-23; Josephus, "Antiquities of the Jews," XIX, VIII). Christianity early found its way to Cæsarea through Philip the evangelist, who probably founded a Christian Church there, where

he still resided at the time he entertained Paul on his way to Jerusalem, when Agabus foretold his arrest. Peter met Cornelius at this seaport city, where he shocked the Jews by baptizing a group of uncircumcised Gentiles (Acts 10: 45-48). Cæsarea was the Roman port of Jerusalem and the residence of the Roman governor of Judea, which accounts for Paul's delivery there, under the direction of Claudius Lysias, for arraignment before the Roman procurator, Antonius Felix, who had been a slave in the household of the Emperor Claudius at Rome. According to Tacitus he was "a man who, from low beginning, rose to power, and, with the true genius of a slave, exercised the tyranny of an Eastern prince." His first wife was the daughter of Antony and Cleopatra, his third was Drusilla, a Jewess, whom he induced to leave her husband, King of Emesa, and, contrary to the Jewish law, marry him, a Gentile.

The high priest, Ananias, and certain members of the Sanhedrin appeared before Felix, with Tertullus, as counsel, to conduct the prosecution of Paul, who conducted his own defense without counsel. The prisoner was summoned and the criminal accusation was formally made, which charged the defendant with (a) being an agitator and causing factious tumults among the Jews throughout the Empire, which was an offense against the Roman government amounting to treason against the Emperor, (b) being a leader of the sect of the Nazarene, and (c) attempting to profane the Temple at Jerusalem—also an offense against the Roman law, which protected the Jews in the exercise of their worship. Back of this proceeding was a purpose to have the prisoner returned to Jerusalem for trial before the Sanhedrin upon the charges of treason, heresy, and sacrilege. To that end Tertullus argued that Lysias had

proceeded in an irregular manner in sending the prisoner to Felix.

Paul felt that the objection raised by Tertullus as to the jurisdiction of the court was not sincere; but he realized its effectiveness, if sustained, for he suspected another conspiracy to kill him on the way to Jerusalem. Therefore he answered, in adroit fashion, by expressing his satisfaction that he was privileged to plead his cause before one so well acquainted with the Jewish customs. He met the charges of the indictment by declaring that he had left Cæsarea only twelve days before and had gone to Jerusalem to worship and to bear alms and offerings to his distressed people, hence there had been no opportunity to arouse the disturbance of which he was charged. Any offense under this charge which he may have committed while he was on his missionary journeys was in territory beyond the jurisdiction of Felix, who was careful on this point, as the first question he asked when the prisoner was delivered to him was concerning the province of his residence (Acts 23: 34). Paul specifically admitted his connection with the sect of the Nazarene, but stoutly maintained that he was not disloyal to the faith of the "fathers." He denied that he had profaned the Temple, proclaiming his belief in "all things which are written in the law and the prophets," and professed a "conscience void of offense toward God and men." This argument before Felix is the fifth of the fragmentary speeches of Paul which have been preserved (Acts 24: 10-21).

Felix well knew that the prosecution had failed to make out a case against the accused, but he did not want to offend the accusers from Jerusalem, and he had other even more reprehensible reasons for withholding a decision, therefore the case was continued until Lysias could testify.

In the meantime, the prisoner was placed in charge of the centurion, with direction that he be treated with kindness and consideration.

The ulterior motive of Felix was to take advantage of the loyalty of the Christians to each other, and by detaining Paul he hoped to receive a bribe to liberate him. He was given to such conduct, which ultimately resulted in his recall. There were frequent subsequent conversations between Felix and the prisoner. On one occasion he summoned Paul to an audience in the chamber, where he was seated with his wife Drusilla, who had become interested in the case. As Paul talked of uprightness, self-control, and the coming judgment, Felix trembled and sent him away, as his guilty conscience could not withstand such indirect rebuke.

For two years Paul was a Roman prisoner at Cæsarea, which enforced idleness furnished occasion for a much-needed rest, as his activities had been continuous since he started on his first missionary journey, years before. While such rest was not a desirable vacation, Paul did not suffer the hardships of confinement, as his treatment was somewhat similar to what we would term in our day a "release on his own recognizance." However, he was not relieved of his chains, or the surveillance of a Roman officer, and indeed his Jewish enemies kept close watch of his movements; but although he was allowed access to his followers through the indulgent treatment, yet no definite work was accomplished. He grew weary of his inactivity, even though he enjoyed liberal privileges as a prisoner.

Finally Felix was recalled to Rome, and Nero sent Porcius Festus to Cæsarea as procurator, and he found Paul still in chains, for the impeached judge did not have the courage to release him, in face of the fact that the Jews

were responsible for his recall, through their complaints of his merciless conduct.

As a policy of diplomacy, and to establish as pleasant relations as possible in his official capacity, Festus first went to Jerusalem to meet the leading Hebrews, who immediately requested him to order Paul returned to Jerusalem for trial before the Sanhedrin. According to Tacitus, Felix had inflamed the discontents, and the new governor wanted to form favorable contacts by showing the Jews every possible consideration.

Festus had too much appreciation of Roman jurisdiction to surrender it at the behest of the fanatical Jews; but when he returned to Cæsarea a deputation from Jerusalem accompanied him, and Paul was ordered to appear before the court. Accusations were presented by the delegation from the Sanhedrin, with demand for the death sentence, for heresy, sacrilege, and treason. Festus realized that the offense was not against the Roman law, but against the religious objections of the Jews; and while convinced that the accused was innocent of any charge within his jurisdiction, yet he wanted to gratify the accusers, if possible, so he proposed to Paul to go to Jerusalem and there be tried before him on these charges. Paul realized what this meant—that he would be killed before he reached the Holy City, for the same spirit that existed when he left there was still manifest in those who had come to accuse him. He well knew that the proposal of Festus was part of a revived conspiracy which Claudius Lysias had thwarted. Here was another crisis that required immediate and definite decision and action. He could not escape Roman jurisdiction, and he must answer this Roman judge forthwith. He did not know the temper of Festus, who had been induced to suggest his return to Jerusalem, but he

well knew the hatred of the mob that surrounded him. With startling and decisive courage he made prompt and conclusive reply. *"I stand before Cæsar's tribunal, and there ought my trial to be. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as thou knowest full well. If I am guilty of breaking the law and have done anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if the things whereof these men accuse me are not true, no man can give me up to them. I appeal unto Cæsar."* This was an inalienable right of a Roman citizen and automatically suspended all further proceedings on the part of Festus, who immediately recognized the jurisdictional question and said, *"Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar; to Cæsar thou shalt go."* With this order, jurisdiction was transferred from Cæsarea to Rome, and the only further duty of Festus was to provide safe custody for the prisoner, and prepare a transcript of the proceedings in his court. The representatives from Jerusalem were disappointed in another defeat, and it is hardly possible to imagine their chagrin as they returned. The proceedings were so vague and unlike those of a Roman court that it was difficult for Festus to make up a transcript of the record for the Emperor's court.

Festus sought the counsel of Herod Agrippa, a descendant of Herod the Great, who had distinguished himself in the exercise of authority over certain Roman provinces in that part of the Empire. The procurator hoped, through this contact, to secure a statement by the prisoner which he could transmit to the Imperial court as the law required. This afforded occasion for quite a show. Festus commanded Paul to be brought into the audience room where Agrippa and his sister Bernice, famous for her beauty and dissoluteness, had come with great pomp, attended by the chief captains and leading citizens of the community.

The spectacle developed into a searching appeal, which Paul made with diplomatic speech in the review of his experiences, including the persecution of the saints of Jerusalem, his journey to Damascus, his conversion, and his preaching to Jews and Gentiles. This was the sixth and last of the orations of Paul that we have (Acts 26). Agrippa was greatly impressed and announced to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," whereupon the prisoner replied: "I would to God that not only you, but all who hear me to-day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these chains." With this the "king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them," and Festus proceeded to prepare the record for the appellate tribunal, for transmission to Rome with the prisoner, who was now safely beyond the jurisdiction of the Jewish Sanhedrin.

XXX

A PERILOUS VOYAGE TO ROME

(Acts 27, 28)

“Lead on, O King Eternal,
We follow, not with fears;
For gladness breaks like morning
Where'er thy face appears;
Thy cross is lifted o'er us;
We journey in its light;
The crown awaits the conquest;
Lead on, O God of might.”

—ERNEST W. SHURTLEFF.

It was in the autumn of 59 A.D. that a convoy of Roman prisoners, in charge of Julius, a centurion of the Augustan cohort, and a detachment of soldiers, sailed in a coasting vessel from Cæsarea, bound for the capital of the world. Possibly some of those in custody had been condemned to death, and were destined to supply the perpetual demand, which the most popular form of public amusement at Rome made upon the provinces at that time, to provide human victims to fight wild beasts in the arena. Paul, of course, was not classed with such prisoners, as his Roman citizenship furnished him distinction, and he was not under sentence, but an appellant—true, charged with a capital crime—to the Emperor's court. In addition, he was accompanied by his personal physician, Luke, and his body servant Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, who may also have been in custody (Col. 4: 10). A prisoner could not be accompanied by any one except an attendant (Pliny, Epist. III, 16). No doubt these attentions enhanced Paul

in the eyes of Julius, and may, possibly, account for the early deference paid the prisoner by the centurion.

Similar indulgence to that granted Paul was accorded Gallio, when Tiberius opposed his interference with the discipline of the army, in his suggestion that the soldiers of the Prætorian band, having served the requisite time, should enjoy the privilege of occupying seats in the theater in the same section with the Roman knights. For this trespass of authority, Gallio was at first banished and subsequently returned to Rome and ordered into close confinement in the house of a civil magistrate (Tacitus, *Annals* VI, 3), where he met his death at the hands of Nero.

A detailed account of Paul's voyage to Rome, as described by Luke, upon whom it made indelible impression, is of greater historic interest when taken in connection with certain incidents which reflect striking traits in the character of Paul.

The ship first laid anchor at Sidon, some seventy miles north of Cæsarea, where the missionary was permitted to go ashore with his physician "to refresh himself" (27: 3), a privilege that would not have been granted an ordinary prisoner. From Sidon they sailed to the east of the Island of Cyprus, and over a zigzag route, due to interchanging winds, land breezes and calms, along the Cilician and Pamphylian coast, to the southwestern extremity of Asia Minor. At Myra, a city of Lycia, the centurion arranged to transfer his prisoners to an Alexandrian grain ship *en route* to Italy. As these transports were sailing vessels, they were so dependent upon the course of the wind that it was found expedient, as far as possible, to follow a route available to harbors; and, after a short stop at Onidus, the Egyptian vessel proceeded direct to the isle of Crete. The ship rounded the point of the island known as Cape Sa-

lome, and a turbulent sea forced her into the harbor of Fair Haven, which, despite its name, furnished scant protection from the contrary winds. The master of the vessel, over the protest of Paul, who was called in counsel because of his experience as a traveler, decided to proceed toward Phœnix, the next and a better protected harbor of Crete. Paul's advice was based upon knowledge from experience with the treacherous winds at that season of the year. He said: "Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives" (27: 10). It must be remembered that three times had Paul suffered shipwreck, and had spent a night and a day "in the deep" (2 Cor. 11: 25). But "when the south wind blew softly," the master of the ship weighed anchor, and as they were running close along the coast of the island, a fierce land wind carried them far out at sea. For two weeks they drifted with the tempest, and saw neither the sun by day nor stars by night. Amid driving winds and lashing rains they lowered their sails, and undergirded the ship with ropes to support her timbers against the strain of the storm, while they drifted without chart or compass in strange waters. Without knowledge as to their whereabouts, their courage finally failed them and they gave themselves up as lost, with the only hope that the wind would subside before they were wrecked on the shores of Africa. When they had gone a number of days without food, Paul stood among them and reminded them of his advice not to subject themselves to this apparent disaster, but with perfect confidence urged them to keep their courage. By reason of a vision he had just witnessed, which he described as an angel of God giving him assurance that there should be no loss of life, he asserted his faith in their ultimate safety, but warned them

that the ship would be destroyed, and they would be stranded on an island. On the fourteenth day, near midnight, the shipmen detected the drift anchor touching bottom, and they knew that land was near. As a precautionary measure, four anchors were cast, lest they be hurled against unknown rocks. The sailors were still in panic and were lowering the boat with purpose to abandon the ship, when vigilant Paul detected their design in time to defeat it and prevent peril to all the passengers, through this cowardice of the crew. He realized that with the dawn of a new day they would be put to a new and difficult task, hence he urged them to take nourishment, as the days of dreadful panic had all but destroyed their appetites. Paul was the "still, strong man" in this anxious crisis, and his courage was never more contagious than on this occasion. "He took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all" (27: 35). They joined with him in the repast and then with renewed hope resumed their duties. While Paul's spirit had reassured them, the mariners still felt fear of danger and hence proceeded to lighten the ship, by casting her cargo into the sea. When the dawn began to break they discovered that they were near an unknown land. The cables connecting the anchors were detached, the rudders unlashed, and the ship moved toward the strange shore. But suddenly the keel plunged into a sand bar with such force that it must have sunk into the clay, for it was held fast, while the stern, unprotected, was battered by the raging billows until it gave way under the violence of the terrific impact. Abandonment of the ship was inevitable, and nothing was left but for each passenger to look after his own safety. The land was clearly visible and near enough so that those who could withstand the shock of chilling waters might swim in safety to the

shore. But the situation presented a new problem to those who were responsible for the criminals.

Under the Roman law the soldiers were answerable with their lives for the delivery of the prisoners to Rome. "Self-preservation is a strong and pitiless instinct," and these convoys took counsel and decided to massacre the prisoners before they swam ashore and made their escape. But Julius, the centurion, in command, had become deeply impressed with Paul in the tragic ordeal through which they had passed, therefore he vetoed the proposed atrocity, with the order to all who could swim to jump overboard and the rest to float on pieces of the ship's wreckage. Thus one by one they floated away from the disintegrating derelict. "And so it came to pass, that they escaped, all safe to land," which they found was the island of Melita. Paul's calm and confident manner had transformed his position from that of a mistrusted prisoner to the commanding figure of the two hundred and seventy-six refugees.

This ascendancy was attained by the dominating forcefulness of his personality. It is not to be inferred that the reference to these inhabitants as "barbarous" means that they were savages, but rather that they were not Greeks. They treated these castaways with real kindness and solicitous consideration, by building a bonfire for their comfort until permanent refuge could be afforded in the town of Melita, some distance inland. Paul won the admiration of the natives more quickly than he had gained the confidence of his traveling companions, by reason of the results of a poisonous viper that buried its fangs in his flesh as it crawled from a fagot of wood which he was placing upon the camp fire. They awaited his certain and swift death from the poison of the reptile, which, from

their superstition, they assumed was visited upon him as a vile criminal, who had escaped the peril of the sea only to fall victim to a surer vengeance on the land. But when no untoward effect was manifest from a cause which, through long experience, had been found to be fatal, they concluded, as did the folk at Lystra, that he was a god. This impression of sanctity was later augmented by many miracles performed by Paul among the natives, which afforded him comfortable lodging with the chief magistrate of the island and generous benefactions from the inhabitants during the three winter months they were compelled to sojourn there until navigation was resumed. (This island is now called Malta, whose shifting shores through twenty centuries have still left a land indenture, now called St. Paul's Bay.)

When oversea navigation opened in the following February or March, it happened that another grain ship from Alexandria, which had been driven into a winter harbor of the island, was chartered by Julius, to transport his passengers to an Italian port available to Rome. Paul and his attendants were laden with generous gifts from the grateful "barbarians" (28: 10).

Puteoli, on the Bay of Naples, while more than a hundred miles from Rome, was the regular port of Alexandrian grain ships, and there the third vessel used in this voyage, "whose sign was Castor and Pollux" (or "The Twin Brothers," patrons of seamen, according to mythology), delivered the prisoners of Julius on Italian soil.

Christianity had already been established there, and Paul soon formed congenial contacts, which made his stay pleasant, while Julius awaited orders from his superior officer at Rome regarding the disposition of his prisoners. It was a week before the centurion started with his sub-

jects on the march to the capital. In the meantime news of Paul's coming had reached the Christians there and they hastened to meet him. His epistle to them had evidently made such impression that they were eager to talk with their correspondent. Paul was nearing a field of labor he had long sought to visit, but the circumstances of his coming necessarily caused him anxiety at the ordeal that awaited him. It was therefore great comfort to a defendant *en route* to trial before the Emperor's court, charged with a grave crime, to be given an ovation on the highway by crowds who had never seen his face and were only influenced by his fame and his letter to them, written three years before. Such an experience was calculated to revive the depressed spirit of the prisoner and relieve his misgivings. No wonder "he thanked God and took courage."

XXXI

A MILITARY PRISONER WHEN NERO RULED ROME

(Acts 28: 16-30)

"Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans."—Acts 28: 17.

WHEN Julius arrived at Rome with his prisoners, he delivered all of them, except Paul, to his superior officer at the camp of the Prætorian Guard. The appellant to the Emperor's court was allowed to live in his own rented quarters, under the surveillance of a Roman soldier. While he was permitted to invite friends to his house and to preach to all who came, his outside movements were restricted, as he was attached to a military guard by a chain fastened to the wrist of each.

True to his consistent custom throughout his ministry, he sought "the Jew first." There were fifty thousand of them in Rome. Three days after his arrival Paul invited the representatives of the Jewish community to an audience with him, and explained to them that, while he had done nothing violative of Jewish custom, he had been arrested at Jerusalem and held as a Roman prisoner; that the Roman court at Cæsarea would have released him but for the objection of the Jews, which forced him to appeal to Cæsar, and that he was in chains on account of the hope of Israel.

Apparently they received his statement with scant in-

terest, as they advised him that they had received no letters or complaints from Judea against him. That was strange. His enemies from Jerusalem were greatly surprised when he appealed to the Emperor's court, and they had not yet sufficiently recovered from their disappointment, at the successful manner in which he had eluded them, to prepare for this appeal. The centurion started from Cæsarea to Rome with his prisoners shortly after the order, granting the appeal, had been issued. To be sure, Paul's audience at Rome knew of his work, and it is quite possible that their indifference was feigned, but by such attitude the prisoner might be induced to make a full statement of his beliefs to them. They took occasion to advise him that they understood the sect 'which he championed had been denounced everywhere.

their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

This declaration left him in a consistent position to make a further retort to them, which he did with this confident and somewhat defiant statement (28: 28): "Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

Thus it was that Paul began his evangelistic work as a prisoner at Rome, where he spent two years awaiting trial before the Emperor's court. Proper appreciation of his experience can only be had by viewing the same in the light of conditions in Rome at that time.

Nero had been chosen Emperor by the Senate upon the death of Claudius in the year 54, and was then in the sixth year of his reign. He was not of the blood of the Cæsars, but his mother Agrippina had married Claudius a few years before, and persuaded him to set aside his own son, Britannicus, and adopt as heir, Nero, her son by a former marriage. No sooner had this promise been made than she sought to equip the heir presumptive to rule. She had Seneca, the Stoic philosopher, brother of Gallio (who had discharged Paul, when he was arraigned before his court at Corinth), recalled from exile to act as tutor for Nero. The youth proved docile to the teachings of this scholar, which fact fired his mother's ambition, and she launched a campaign to create a sentiment in the Senate favorable to her son. Tacitus is authority for the tradition, questioned by some later historians, that Agrippina hired attendants of her husband, Claudius, to poison him.

While Nero did not possess imperial qualities, he had the counsel of Seneca, the scholar, and Burrhus, the soldier-statesman, as well as the solicitous support of his moth-

er, who was active in her efforts for her son's success. For several years the empire was practically ruled by these three advisors, during which time, according to Tacitus, the government was excellent. Agrippina's interest in politics was due solely to a desire to develop her son as a true leader and a successful ruler, but Nero's nature was not responsive to the exercise of power. In this he was not different from many men in history, who have failed in capacity to perform high official service. His appetites and passions clouded his interest in the people, and his coarse depravity finally destroyed all sense of duty and public trust. He took no interest in the sessions of the Senate, and preferred his music lessons to the study of military tactics and the strategy of statesmanship. Finally the lofty ambition of Agrippina was stubbornly and sullenly resented by Nero. She was so persistent in her ambition for his success that she grew desperate in her efforts to have him realize his responsibility, and went so far as to intimate that he should be dethroned and Claudius's own son, Britannicus, chosen as his successor. The threat did not stimulate him as she had hoped, but met a vicious resentment from the young Emperor, who had his rival poisoned while he was his guest at an elaborate dinner. The dastardly crime at first aroused resentment among the people, but was soon forgotten. They had grown somewhat tired of the old Roman virtues of activity, glory, and power, and were looking for ease and indolence; hence they were in sympathy with Nero and resentful of his mother's strenuous loyalty to Roman traditions.

The youthful Emperor became degraded to an incredible degree, and his depravity made him indifferent to all appeal of obligation and ambition. He became infatuated with Poppæa Sabina, who was handsome, capable, and

quite clever in her cunningness. Nero desired to marry her, but he was encumbered by his faithful wife, Octavia, and his no less dutiful mother, who would not tolerate such an expression of infidelity as his divorce of Octavia and marriage to Poppæa.

The new paramour disposed of her husband by sending him away, and the Emperor drove his mother from the palace that he might not be annoyed by her disapproval of his mistress. Strange to say, the Roman people approved of Nero's course, which not only evidenced the degraded state of society but also the fact that Agrippina's popularity was waning. This encouraged the young Emperor in considering the shocking suggestion that he have his mother assassinated.

Until Poppæa came upon the stage, Nero had neither the courage to break with his mother and conduct the affairs of government without her, nor the character to follow, upon his own initiative, her wholesome advice as to his general public policy. But with this new influence in his life he gradually yielded to a despicable purpose to destroy his devoted mother. He could never win her consent to divorce Octavia and marry Poppæa, hence he finally resorted to desperate and diabolical methods to have her murdered. He first arranged for her to take a trip at sea, with well-laid plans to have her drowned; but she escaped the misguided shipwreck, in which the hired murderers killed one of her freedwomen, whom they mistook for Agrippina; and when his victim had been safely landed by a passing boat, she innocently dispatched a message to the Emperor advising him of her safety. This created consternation, lest Agrippina's experience might arouse justified suspicion, and Nero called Seneca and Burrhus in counsel and fully advised them of the defeat of his wicked

scheme. Strange to relate, these two men, of supposedly sound knowledge and wide experience, sympathized with the Emperor and actually advised further attempt to murder his loyal mother; whereupon the accomplices, who had theretofore failed, went to the villa of Agrippina and stabbed her to death. Nero, in order to avoid public reproach, sought to make it appear that his mother had committed suicide; but he failed in this false effort, and there was a real revulsion of the people at this abominable crime. He flinched under this formidable opposition and yielded to the influences of the degraded element of the community by giving them a dissolute rule. He lost all sense of dignity and indulged himself and the Roman populace in a delirium of dissipation that developed into a state of corruption which seemed all but irrational. Nero organized and directed the "festival of youth," where the young patricians sang and danced at official functions and indulged all the tendencies which tradition deemed unworthy of Roman noblemen. Such laws as those which had been enacted under Augustus, prohibiting and punishing adultery with severe penalties, were ignored. The treasures of the government, its provinces and cities, were plundered with impunity. The imperial palace was the rendezvous of jazz musicians, jockeys, and athletes. While public resentment at Agrippina's death had deferred Nero's marriage to Poppæa, his encouragement of ease and folly was gradually fostering a general feeling of indifference to all the finer sentiments sacred to the Roman spirit. The modern historian, Ferrero, ascribes the encroaching influence of Oriental civilization as a factor which contributed in large measure in breaking down Roman customs. When Nero eventually divorced Octavia and married Poppæa, there were popular demonstrations of resentment, and for

the moment people craved a return to the policies of Augustus, Tiberius, and Claudius. The childish Emperor never typified the austerity and gravity of the Roman idea of the Chief of State. For a successor to Julius Cæsar to appear in public with a zither in his hand instead of the sword was truly shocking to those who revered Roman traditions.

When the great conflagration devastated the imperial city in July, 64 A.D., the people were quick to suspect Nero, possibly because, in a drunken revelry, he had sworn that he would destroy the capital and rebuild it with another, of finer proportions. In the agony of desolation, poverty, and distress, amid the embers of a destroyed metropolis, the people were slow to accept extravagant promises of great architectural improvement, when they felt that they would never enjoy the reality of such a dream. The fury of this invincible hate was too much for Nero, whose excesses had so depleted his physical and mental resources that he was unable to maintain the confidence of the people, and "his government degenerated into a complete tyranny, suspicious, violent, and cruel." In his delirious exercise of authority he ordered the massacre of patricians and the death of Seneca, his loyal supporter. In the remorse of dissipation and debauchery, he killed his wife Poppæa and finally drove a dagger through his own heart. Indifferent to all spirit of responsibility, and indulgent to every suggestion of selfish indifference, Nero was exactly the antithesis of St. Paul.

In thus anticipating that part of the story of Nero's conduct covering the latter years of his reign, it is unnecessary to recur to the contemptible traits of character revealed therein which should here be briefly noticed, in order to have a complete picture of conditions surrounding

St. Paul, in this easy-going, luxury-loving, selfish, and cruel community, to which he had been brought a prisoner. The Apostle did not quail under such environment; but fully realizing these vicious influences, he maintained a dominant purpose, to teach purity in living, candor and courage in conduct, self-sacrificing love for his fellow men, and reverence for God, as the chief attainments of earthly existence.

XXXII

THE PRISONER'S MESSAGE TO PHILIPPI

(Epistle to the Philippians)

While in prison at Rome Paul wrote to the Church at Philippi: "As life means Christ to me, so death means gain. But then, if it is to be life here below, that means fruitful work for me. So—well, I cannot tell which to choose. I am in a dilemma between the two. My strong desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far best. But for your sakes it is necessary I should live on here below."—PHILIPPIANS 1: 21-24.

PAUL hoped for an early hearing on his appeal to the Emperor's court at Rome. It did not occur to him that he would suffer a repetition of his long-drawn-out experience at Cæsarea. For quite a time he daily awaited the citation to appear for trial, before he realized the strategy of delay employed by those who sought to curb his activity by prolonging his confinement. True, his operations had covered a wide range of territory, but his message was the same everywhere; and if it constituted criminal propaganda, there was no necessity to go to remote sections for witnesses and thereby postpone the prosecution. But Paul did not propose to be defeated by their dilatory tactics, so he availed himself of the material at hand for instruction in the faith of the gospel. The frequent change of his guard, who heard his discourses to those visiting him at his living quarters, supplemented the influence of his followers throughout the city (1: 12, 13). He had much to discourage him through the same Judaist influences that operated against him in Galatia and Achaia, insisting upon the obli-

gations of the Mosaic Code; but he was ever alert and full of hope and courage, in spite of his prison handicap. It is evident that Luke and Aristarchus soon left Rome, but the loss of their companionship was supplanted by the arrival of Timothy, his amanuensis in his letters to the Thessalonians, and no doubt then engaged in taking his dictation and transcribing letters to the various churches theretofore established by Paul, including the one at Philippi. The circumstances of Timothy's conversion at Lystra on the first mission, and his loyal and efficient service thereafter, made him a great favorite with the missionary. Later, Epaphroditus of Philippi came with a letter of sympathy; and as on former occasions the Macedonian converts had been mindful of Paul's material comfort, again they sent him a generous contribution. He had frequently been forced to provide his necessities by resorting to his handicraft; but the chains which fettered him, as well as his confinement, would not permit such labor, which may not have been available, as he was personally a stranger to the members of his trade in this metropolis.

Philippi had long been a city of importance. The gold mines in that vicinity at one time supported a substantial population and indeed financed Alexander the Great in extending his dominion over the Orient. It was at the battle of Philippi that Brutus and Cassius were defeated in 42 B.C. and the Roman republic was changed to an Empire, with Augustus as sovereign. It was there that the First Christian Church in Europe was established by Paul on his second mission.

While this city has long since faded from the map, and but little is left to mark its departed grandeur, its historical importance is significant, due to the fact that it was (a) at one time the vantage ground by reason of its wealth

of gold; at another (b) because of force of arms; and again (c) because it was the original situs of Europe's spiritual enlightenment.

Epaphroditus was a staunch companion of the prisoner at Rome, until he was incapacitated by illness, which so depressed him that he became homesick. Paul had delayed writing to his benefactors, but his tardiness was not due to lack of appreciation or affection. In his distressed situation, as a prisoner, he wrote a letter, the keynote of which was joy and gratitude. By this it must not be inferred that he was reconciled to his surroundings. He could hardly be said to be even confident of his acquittal; but his unfailing courage constrained him to magnify Christ, "whether it be by life or death" (1: 20). His accusers would not only ask for a verdict of guilt, but would demand immediate execution. He was willing to live or die for his faith. If by living he could stimulate Christian exultation, he was willing to postpone what he was certain was to be a far finer existence, in being with Christ.

What a courageous realization of earthly responsibility, and what a marvelous faith in immortality! He does not linger in this soliloquizing attitude, but counsels the Philippians to stand firm, with one spirit and one purpose, fighting side by side, never faltering before the opposition; for courage is a Christian virtue, necessary to a life worthy of the gospel of the Master.

It is clear that there was evidence of dissension in the congregation at Philippi, which unfortunately has existed in many Christian churches ever since that day. Paul was ever ready to face practical questions, involving weaknesses of human nature, which he understood as well as any human being that ever lived. He had a definite and

appropriate remedy, which, if heeded, was sure to be effective. He counseled that the only way to avoid or eliminate factions in a Christian Church was through the practice of humility and unselfishness. Usually it is a person, unconsciously vain and selfish, desiring to assume a position of leadership, without qualification therefor, who is responsible for the discord which arises in an organization. As Paul approached this situation (which Epaphroditus had evidently reported to him), with his usual diplomacy, he illustrated his remedy with the most outstanding example he could command. He reminded them of Christ's humility, in taking the form of man and being subjected to all the temptations and humiliations that could be offered to a human being, even submitting to the most excruciating agony that human flesh could suffer, yet ever free from any semblance of vainglory as well as from murmurings and disputes. Then he makes the application, by urging them to let God into their hearts, to inspire their will and their action, and make them shine like stars in the crooked and perverted world which was about them. His followers at Philippi had joined him and stood by him, amid insolent persecution of scourging and imprisonment; hence it is no wonder that he was bound to them by strong ties, and that they enjoyed his unbounded confidence. Here he first preached in the home of Lydia, which enabled him to make contacts with worth-while people, who had ever since shown great affection for the Apostle. His interest in them was evidenced by at least three visits to Philippi of which we have record (Acts 16: 12, 2 Cor. 2: 13, Acts 20: 6).

The church was organized with bishops and deacons, and from the beginning women were active and helpful, for which service Paul felt deep appreciation (4: 3). His

experience with women in Philippi had covered a wide social range, from Lydia, the merchant princess, to the slave girl, whose conversion had caused her to abandon her profession as soothsayer, thereby causing Paul's arrest, scourging, and imprisonment, at the instance of her owners. Now it seems that the division was due to two jealous women, whom Paul patiently rebukes and then implores to realize the true mission of their work and "be of the same mind in the Lord" (4: 2).

When he was apparently closing his epistle (3: 1), something prompted him to issue a violent warning against evil workers, whom he scored vehemently; and then announced a policy, helpful to those who are disposed to brood over disappointment, by declaring: "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." It was this conception that prompted his admonition to "rejoice in the Lord always." In a spirit of supreme joy he declared, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

While this letter was prompted as an acknowledgment of a material gift, it abounds in spiritual suggestions, in calm and clear presentation of the positive principles of Christianity, and reflects his joy in living *through* Christ and *in* Christ. It was a personal message and reflected a keen personal interest and genuine affection for the Philippians. As was his frequent custom he acknowledged himself a Jew and a Pharisee, upright in his respect for the

law; but, even so, his great joy was based upon his knowledge of Christ, and while he had lost the things which he formerly considered gain, he counted it but refuse as compared with the righteousness of his Saviour. Although he had analyzed and proclaimed the great messages of Jesus of Nazareth, he still studied them as the source of all his power and influence. He had "learned" (4: 11), hence he "knew" (4: 12) and could "do" (4: 13) all things, because the power of Christ strengthened him. His tranquillity is exemplified in his expression of appreciation of the Philippian contribution to his personal necessities, "not that I speak in respect of want; for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, to be content."

The prayer arranged by the late Bishop John H. Vincent summarizes Paul's supplication in his letter to the Philippians:

"Oh God, enlighten my mind with truth;
 Inflame my heart with love;
 Inspire my will with courage;
 Enrich my life with service;
 Pardon what I have been;
 Sanctify what I am;
 Order what I shall be.
 And thine shall be the glory and
 Mine the eternal salvation.
 Through Jesus Christ my Lord."

XXXIII

GNOSTICISM THREATENS THE CHRISTIANS OF THE LYCUS VALLEY

(Epistle to the Colossians)

"Pauline contemplation is a reaction to a divine visitation; the strings within vibrate at the touch of God's fingers; the trembling soul reacts to revelation."—ADOLPH DEISSMANN.

DURING his sojourn of more than two years at Ephesus, Paul made contacts with people from the surrounding country, which resulted in establishing various congregations of Christians in Asia Minor. There was a group in the valley of the Lycus River, to the east of Ephesus, in the neighboring towns of Colossæ, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, which had been sponsored by Epaphras, a resident of that vicinity, whom Paul recognized as his "fellow-servant" and a "faithful minister of Christ." Similar recognition was acknowledged to Tychicus, a native of that province, who had accompanied Paul on his last trip to Jerusalem, as the representative of the churches of that territory in transmitting the donation to the saints of the Holy City.

Since Asia Minor was the borderland between the East and the West, it furnished a fertile field for the mingling of ideas of rival civilizations, with the result that there was developed a theory, concerning material creation and the origin of evil, that threatened the tranquillity of these early Christian communities. The incipient evidences of such influences were possibly sensed by Paul

when he gave warning of those "speaking perverse things" in his address to the elders at Miletus, *en route* to Jerusalem (Acts 20: 29, 30). The missionary had never visited the congregations in the Lycus Valley in person, yet he had evidently expressed deep interest in them, and when their faith was disturbed by a new heresy it was not unnatural that Epaphras and Tychicus should have appeared at Rome, seeking counsel of Paul as to the proper method to pursue in meeting this strange menace.

While the threatening heresy had not developed into the form of Gnosticism, under which it flourished a century later, it had attained sufficient order and influence to make an appeal that was agitating the members of these early churches.

Its approach was insidious, in that it concerned itself directly with the problem of evil as a stubborn fact which it sought to overcome by a theory of life, which was claimed to be helpful to every believer, in combating the destructive processes of sin.

The Gnostic teaching involved a shadowy mysticism with reference to the creation of the world. Its votaries believed that there was a graduated series of heavenly powers between God and material things; that one of this hierarchy of angels in some mysterious way made constructive contact with matter and thereby the world was created. Many students of Paul claim that he was strongly inclined to mysticism, and if so, he was met with a striking advocacy of it in these Gnostics of Asia Minor.

They recognized the two worlds of good and evil—the one divine, the other material. The material world was regarded by them as the true seat of evil, filled with hostile energies and powers. They did not believe that evil was in man, but in matter; and since matter is essentially

evil, God could not have created the material universe. This curious theory of the creation of the world, and also of the source of evil, was more bewildering than satisfying, in that it resulted in conflicting ideas as to the regulations of personal habits consistently to meet the tenets of this theory of earthly existence. The human body, being regarded as the prison-house of the immortal soul, was by some held to be subject to extreme rigor and self-denial, and by others treated as an object of indifference, because, being material, it was necessarily corruptible. Here the ascetic, with his extreme interpretations, requiring severe discipline, clashed with the liberal, who, treating material things as essentially evil, indulged his carnal nature without restraint. Both claimed to be consistent with the teachings of Christ, who was recognized by them as one of the many powers for righteousness, correlated with the works of God. These theories were held in a spirit of superior wisdom, with the fervent claim that it was only through revelation that their significance could be realized and appreciated.

With this information concerning the confusion among the Christians in these towns of the Lycus Valley, Paul addressed his Epistle to the Colossians from his prison apartment at Rome. There was but one answer to all this complex and confounding system of Gnosticism, which Paul regarded as specious make-believe, and that was *the supremacy of Christ in all God's purposes and plan of creation*. The manner in which Paul presented this conclusive argument is most interesting. While he considered the doctrines of these sophists and savants as stupidities, he did not proceed by denouncing them. That would have provoked controversy and further discussion, which he would have been at a disadvantage in pursuing, because of the handi-

cap of his imprisonment. But instead, he let their complicated theories stand without comment and placed beside them the alternative that Christ is "the image of the invisible God;" and, that fair comparison might be made of their vagaries, he proceeded to consider the significance of their respective claims. In declaring the supremacy of Christ, he went further than he had gone in his Epistle to the Thessalonians, where he was compared to a judge that would come without warning; or to the Corinthians, where he was declared the foundation of the Church; or to the Galatians where he was proclaimed as the liberator from ceremonial bondage; or to the Romans where he was represented as a redeemer from sin; or to the Philippians where he was held out as a source of joy and happiness. Paul now declares that Christ "embodies all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Here he challenged their claim of superior mental attainments, which was making peculiar appeal to alert and active-minded people. He upheld the pre-eminence of Christ by further declaring that "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers" (1: 16). As to the realities of religion, Paul stood steadfast by the teachings of Christ, which he held supreme and inviolate.

In answer to their pretense that they had received a revelation, Paul reminded them that God did not reveal himself through the material universe, immense and incomprehensible though it be, but that the true revelation of God came in the person of Christ; "that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (1: 18).

He emphasizes the idea that the finest expression of God, in finite existence, is man, indeed the crown of all

material creation. God takes the form of man to reveal himself; and to make clear his purpose in this revelation, the Son of God was sent upon the earth in this form, as the herald of the gospel of eternal life. Therefore Paul warns them, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (2: 8-10).

While Paul may have had certain appreciation of the attractions of mystery-religions, as did all Jews of his day, he was not misled by their fallacies of asceticism or libertinism. He was concerned more with those ideas that met practical daily problems of life. The origin of evil was then, and has ever been, a subject of unsatisfactory speculation; and the method by which the universe was made, was then, and still remains, a realm for wide range of investigation. But there are certain stern facts of life, which must be faced by every living creature who seeks to overcome vice with virtue; and a way of living that will make life more worth-while was what Paul was seeking to attain. Every noble emotion and every spiritual aspiration with him was symbolized in the teachings of Christ.

His letter did not immediately stop the wave of Gnosticism, which increased in force and volume for a century, not as an enemy to Christianity, but with possibly more harmful influence, in claiming to be its ally. In the test of time's relentless processes, however, the notions of the Gnostics have been abandoned, and Paul's advice to the Christians of the Lycus Valley has withstood the stern trial of stormy experience. The Gnostics' reliance upon their claim to knowledge and wisdom did not sweep Paul

off his feet, since his experience and training enabled him to recognize it as a flagrant assumption of superiority. Rather than make a direct contradiction, he persistently placed truth beside fallacy for competitive test. He was not so much concerned with the origin of evil as how to overcome it. He knew, from his wide observation of people of various nationalities, that selfishness was a fertile soil in which forces of evil were cultivated, and he well knew that "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communications" were champions of evil influences, which stubborn realities the Gnostics did not appreciate.

In his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul magnifies Christ's place in God's plan beyond any former expression by him, in estimating the position of the Master. In doing this he made it clear that the Christian religion is for all races of men and for all the relations of life—"where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all" (3: 11). Thus Paul represents Christ as God's influence in breaking down the hostile forces seeking to divide men on earth, and as the divine power working to unite all mankind into one universal brotherhood.

XXXIV

COMPLEMENTARY MESSAGE TO ASIA MINOR

(Epistle to the Ephesians)

"Religion is the life of God in the soul of man."—LYMAN ABBOTT.

IN his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul asks that the same be read to the Church at Laodicea (4: 16), and that a letter to the Laodiceans be likewise read to the Church at Colossæ. This request has been the source of much discussion, and created considerable doubt, for a long time, as to the identity of the Laodicean letter. The conclusion, now quite universally accepted, is that Paul had reference to the communication, known as the "Epistle to the Ephesians," which was written for distribution among the churches of Asia Minor. The circumstances sustaining this construction were patent. The epistle does not contain Paul's customary personal greeting, which would naturally have been included, had the communication been intended only for the Ephesians, amongst whom he had many devoted friends, with whom he spent more time than any other church established by him.

Furthermore he knew too well the faith of the Ephesians to have referred to it as a matter of hearsay (1: 15); nor would he have suggested the need of credentials to accredit him with them (3: 2, 4).

In his Epistle to the Colossians he effectively contrasted the disturbing heresy with accepted facts; and the letter, to which he makes reference as having been sent to the Church at Laodicea, is clearly a complement to the argu-

ments in the Colossian letter. His purpose was to further answer the vain and misleading theories of Gnosticism, by extolling the heavenly wisdom and sane virtues as revealed by Jesus Christ. While the supreme divinity of Christ dominated both epistles, that to the Laodiceans carries the argument further by setting forth in greater detail the true nature and scope of Christ's teachings.

Paul realized the insufficiency of man to cope with the universality of sin, without the divine enlightenment of Christ's teachings. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." This was the dominant cord that was vibrating in his mind as he wrote the letter we now call the "Epistle to the Ephesians." The thought that these Christians of Asia Minor were willing to subordinate the position of Christ, whom Paul believed to be the Central Being of the Universe, so aroused him that he offered a prayer in the early part of his message: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (1: 17-19). Paul meant to make perfectly clear his confidence in the wisdom, power, and greatness of Christ, as well as the direct revelation of God, in clothing his Son in mortal flesh, from which he was elevated to God's right hand, carrying with him a glorified humanity. He realized the difficulties in overcoming temptations in order to live a correct life, and he sincerely believed that there was no other possible way than that exemplified in the life of

Christ. Therefore the divine enlightenment of Christ's teaching did not permit of substitute or change. He magnified the glory of choice, that comes with a clean heart, above the restraint of stern self-discipline. With him the spiritual interpretation of life was the expression of highest intelligence and wisdom, which could only be realized by recognizing the supreme majesty of Christ.

Paul made a great plea for "the unity of the Spirit" and "the unity of the faith" in the doctrines of Christ. His immediate environment may have impressed him with the efficacy of unity of purpose and effort. He was in a position to observe the most powerful government of history, up to that time, with an organization reaching to remote countries, and ruling peoples of varied habits, ambitions, and ideals, operating effectively by reason of its centralization of power. Such imperial influence, under human guidance, furnished this clear-headed prisoner in chains, with a vision of vastly more dominant power, if the forces of righteousness could be brought under the influence of a spirit of unity in devotion to the teachings of Christ. He had such supreme confidence in the perfection of Christ that he was dominated by a firm conviction that, if the influence of his divine nature could be realized, the human race would be lifted to a glorious plane of thought and action, far above anything theretofore conceived.

This spirit of hope for the ultimate victory of righteousness was a joyous inspiration to this leader, whether in freedom or in chains, and it was with a feeling of supreme satisfaction that he declared his confidence in the love of God, which encompassed all mankind. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called" (6: 1). The practical in life was emphasized in this message to the

people of the district where Diana had been worshiped, by admonition against falsehood, anger, bitterness, malice, and jealousy. He warns that sincerity and truth are not formalities but realities. To speak the truth is not enough; they must be true. Experience has demonstrated the soundness of this idea. Paul's religion was positive, not negative, and he urged honest work in place of sham and subterfuge. The unity which he sought was not a dead level of uniformity. There was work for prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. It required the efforts of all to attain that perfect growth, which he yearned to have realized. To be true and to be loving was the secret of the way of living he was endeavoring to impress. Sincerity and charity are the essential elements of the "new man which after God was created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

Paul was seeking to set forth in a practical way the fundamental things in the life of a Christian community, among which none was more important than a Christian family. He brings out all the duties involved in domestic and social life—the responsibilities of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves—and seeks to inculcate love, obedience, and deference as necessary to holiness and happiness. He had warned against impurity and unfaithfulness, intemperance and indulgence, corrupt communications and clamorous conduct, as generally inimical to Christian living. He makes clear how these vices will destroy the happiness of every individual by degrading and disqualifying him, both for appreciation and performance of his part in the activities of the community. In contrasting the spiritual darkness which had enshrouded them with the spiritual enlightenment which they then enjoyed, he compared fruits of wickedness with the rewards of

righteousness; finally admonishing that they "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (6: 10). "Strength," "Might," and "Power" were favorite words with Paul. He not only used them frequently but exemplified them constantly in his whole program of life. It was therefore natural that he should employ the greatest expression of power of his day to illustrate, in figure of simile, the influence he sought to put in effective operation against the strong and subtle forces that were threatening the followers of Christ, not only in the metropolitan district of Ephesus but the outlying Churches of Asia Minor. He had used the metaphor of the soldier and his armor in his first letter to the Thessalonians (5: 8) as well as in his second letter to the Corinthians (10: 4); but, surrounded as he was with impressive military paraphernalia, it was easy for him to magnify the figure into a mail-clad warrior. He drew the spiritual analogy with effective detail and in eloquent speech. "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand, against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (6: 11-17).

The campaigns of the Cæsars were the inspiration of the Romans, but in the sanctuary of Paul's soul there was

a picture of a vaster campaign, making for greater unity and perpetuity, for a far different type of happiness and glory. The aspiration of this valiant veteran was for the the forces of righteousness to rout the hosts of wickedness. This figure of speech has furnished fine illustration for philosopher and poet to emphasize the teachings of Christ as illustrated and applied by St. Paul. His life was devoted to thoughtful effort to overcome error with truth, to have virtue conquer vice, and sin surrender to righteousness. He recognized that in this struggle for supremacy there was a certain degree of conflict, and that humanity's hopes rest upon the victory of the Christian soldier.

XXXV

THE SOUL OF A SLAVE

(Letter to Philemon)

"The Christian religion has been the unvarying friend and advocate of the bondman."—CARDINAL GIBBONS.

ABOUT the time Epaphras and Tychicus were in Rome, consulting Paul concerning the pernicious influence of Gnosticism in the Tycus Valley, a vagrant from that vicinity visited the apartments of the prisoner, seeking consolation and advice. He was a fugitive slave from Colossæ bearing the name Onesimus, meaning "profitable," given to him in similar spirit as a horse or a dog is named to-day. Such was the custom in naming slaves, regardless of the name before bondage. His master, Philemon, had been converted under Paul's ministry at Ephesus, and returning home had organized a Christian congregation, which met regularly at his residence for religious services.

A very considerable portion of the population of the world at that time was under the bonds of slavery, which was a universal institution, maintained, in large measure, by the use of chains. The armies of the Cæsars, returning in triumph with prisoners of war, would conduct extensive public auctions of human beings. On one occasion more than sixty thousand such victims were sold into bondage. The revenues from such sales were very substantial, and furnished incentive as well as substance for further military operations. While slaves were recruited principally from war, the traffic was not confined to captives of conquest. Pirates operated extensively, but sold their spoils

of pillage clandestinely. One of the leading market places for human chattels was the somewhat obscure and now uninhabited island of Delos, in the Ægean Sea, which indicates the secrecy with which such custom was conducted. There were regular importations of slaves to Rome from Africa, Spain, Gaul, and Asiatic countries, and thereby provision was made for practically all of the manual service required to maintain the population. Those charged with the duties of domestic attendance were composed almost entirely of slaves, and likewise the laborers in agriculture. Physicians, artists, preceptors, and even accountants were in servility in the great households. Actors and performers in the circus were commonly slaves; and gladiators were selected from the captives of the fiercer tribes. Possibly as large a proportion of the population of the earth was then in shackles as at any other time in history. Horace notes that during the reign of Augustus a wealthy freedman disposed of more than four thousand slaves in his will. Gibbon estimated that during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) there were in the Roman world as many slaves as free inhabitants, which means that there were more than twenty million in Italy, including surrounding territory and neighboring islands, and nearly a million in Rome. Under the original Roman law the master had absolute dominion over his slaves, extending to the power of life and death, which existed until taken away by Emperor Hadrian in the second century. Aristotle defined a slave as a "live chattel," which means that they were not regarded as persons, but things. Any property of the slave was, by law, considered as acquired by the master. The penalties for crime were applied with extreme severity to all vassals. Fugitive slaves were branded with hot irons or sometimes had their tongues removed. Tacitus

gives account of a slave who murdered his master, the punishment for which was that more than four hundred subjects owned by the murdered master were executed. This wholesale murder of innocent men, women, and children aroused such resentment that Nero had to order soldiers to protect the executioners, while the Senate, after lengthy debate on the subject, approved the shocking slaughter. The masters were in constant peril of insubordination of their slaves, and it was only by such retaliation that protection could be furnished. The revolt led by Spartacus, a leader in the gladiatorial war against Rome, less than a century before, was still a warning of possible return of a reign of terror.

This was the sentiment with reference to slavery when Onesimus, having stolen money from his master, Philemon, fled to Rome, where he appealed to Paul for relief. No doubt he felt safe when he reached the capital city, for, according to Sallust, the Roman historian, it was "the cesspool into which the refuse of the world streamed." These were the conditions in that part of the world, over which Rome held dominion, when the slave from Asia Minor visited the imprisoned Apostle.

Paul does not seem to have been shocked at the institution of human slavery, but with him the Christian religion was for all men, in all relations of life. He was not so much concerned with the social or civic status of Onesimus as he was with reference to his soul. Physical liberty was to him of less significance than spiritual freedom. He said much about liberty, but always in terms of the freedom of the spirit. He wrote to the Corinthians: "Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. 3: 17). And he advised the Galatians to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath

made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5: 1). The bondage against which he warns the Galatians was spiritual bondage. When Onesimus came to him as a fugitive he only considered him from the viewpoint of his soul's salvation; and when the slave professed belief in the teaching of Paul, and adopted the way of living he was seeking to establish among men, no concern was expressed as to his condition of servitude. Indeed the Apostle advised him to return to his master, to whom he addressed a personal letter, in which not a word was said directly as to the manumission of Onesimus. This letter to Philemon is the only one written on a private matter to an individual. To Paul freedom from sin was the liberty that was most worth while. Possibly he realized that the world was far from the idea of abolishing slavery, and that a request to Philemon to emancipate this returned fugitive would meet scorn and resentment, so universally was slavery approved. But Onesimus had a soul; he was a creature of God who had embraced the Christian religion; and Paul made personal appeal that Philemon, the master, welcome him, *"not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved."* His soul's salvation was safer if he were treated as a "brother beloved," even though in physical bondage.

In his first letter to the Corinthians (7: 21-24) he urged them to "care not for being a bond servant, . . . for he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freedman." To the Corinthians he proclaimed the democracy of Christianity: "For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (1 Cor. 12: 13). With similar sentiment he wrote to the Galatians (3: 28).

It is apropos here to recall that, about the time these

three men of the Lycus Valley were consulting Paul at Rome, there was born in their home vicinity, at Hierapolis, a Greek child who in boyhood was sold into slavery and received the name Epictetus, which in Greek means "acquired." Shortly after he was delivered in bondage he experienced cruel treatment at the hands of his Roman master, who, in torturing him for his own amusement, deliberately broke his leg, while the lad in severe suffering was warning him not to administer such painful punishment. This brutal act left Epictetus a permanent cripple, but did not destroy his high idealism in noble living. Though a salve, he found a way to attend the lectures of the Stoic philosophers and became renowned as a teacher of Stoicism. He taught that all men are sons of God and by nature linked with the divinity. The Stoics avoided the issue of slavery by contending that freedom was of the soul, not of the body; so that Paul's attitude in his letter to Philemon was consistent with that of the leading Greek scholars of that day.

Human slavery is an indefensible institution, but it took the world many centuries to come to a realization of that fact. Enlightenment on this subject came slowly and through much travail of conflict and bloodshed. By tedious and trying processes, the human race came to realize the unnatural, unreasonable, and inconsistent relation of master and slave.

While our own country went through the agony experienced by other nations, it must be recalled that it was reluctantly practiced by many who in reality disapproved it. George Washington provided for the emancipation of his own slaves in his will. Thomas Jefferson, speaking of slavery, said: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." Henry W. Grady expressed the senti-

ment of the American people when he said: "We rejoice that human slavery has been swept forever from American soil." But slavery has not been swept from every land. It is estimated that several millions of human beings are in slavery to-day, but none in any Christian nation. The League of Nations has undertaken to rid the world of this monstrous evil, and no doubt, within a comparatively short time, will eliminate it from the face of the earth. Efforts are not confined to members of the League, but co-operation is being sought from all civilized nations "to assist one another forthwith in the abolition of the slave trade, slavery, and conditions analogous thereto, by all practical means." This influence has already resulted in the emancipation of hundreds of thousands of slaves among the "backward races" of Asia, in very recent years.

Christianity has ever been a persistent influence in elevating the standards and aspirations of civilization to "sweeter manners and purer laws," and has therefore been a powerful force, driving for the final abolition of the status of slavery throughout the world. The key to this influence is Paul's expression, "*a brother beloved*," which he urged Philemon to recognize in Onesimus.

XXXVI

A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ON TRIAL BEFORE "CÆSAR'S COURT"

"All persons possessing any portion of power ought to be strongly and awfully impressed with an idea that they act in trust, and that they are to account for their conduct in that trust to the one great Master, Author, and Founder of society."—EDMUND BURKE.

LUKE concludes the Book of Acts with Paul as a military prisoner at Rome, where he had spent two years preaching, teaching, and writing concerning the way of living taught by Jesus Christ. During this time the missionary has enjoyed extended visits from Timothy, Mark, Luke, and other former coadjutors. Explanations as to why Luke so abruptly terminated his narrative of the life of the missionary take a wide range. Some advance the suggestion that he intended to write additional chapters of Paul's biography, and possibly did so, but that they were lost. Others offer the theory that the Book of Acts was originally prepared by Luke (who accompanied Paul to Rome) as a legal document in the nature of a brief, and used in defense of the defendant before the Emperor's court.

The indefiniteness of the missionary's movements subsequent to Luke's account is relieved, in large measure, by historical data outside the Bible, consistent with the letters of Timothy and Titus, the authorship of which is, by divided authority, attributed to Paul. These excerpts from historians may be more appropriately quoted later in our study.

There can be little doubt that he was tried before the

Emperor's court. The judgment of the court is not so certain, although well-reasoned theories, gathered from reliable historical fragments, account for his future activities. In his letter to Philemon, Paul suggested that the Colossian prepare him a lodging, which indicates that the prisoner was then confident of his acquittal. Reasoning from the most trustworthy data available, it may fairly be concluded that Paul was tried before "Cæsar's court" shortly after his letter to Philemon was written. If so, he was arraigned before a tribunal, composed of the Emperor Nero, as presiding judge, with twenty associate judges, called assessors, of whom two were consuls and eighteen were senators. This court at that time, convened in the Imperial Palace.

When we think of Nero's ignoble ambition and shameless cruelty in causing the murder, (1) of his innocent wife, that he might marry his mistress, (2) of his adopted brother, and (3) of his mother, because of her ambition to make his reign worthy, we shudder at the thought of a religious leader being brought before him for trial. Paul before Nero! One, the embodiment of love and service for all mankind; the other, the incarnation of cruelty and intolerance. In the one we see typified truth, virtue, and courage; in the other, depravity, vice, and cowardice. Paul summed up in his personality the forces of righteous influence in unselfish service; Nero reflected the experience of depraved thought and coarse brutality. A marvel of humility stood for trial, charged with a capital crime, before a monstrous braggart, who was to determine the question of the life and death of the accused.

But it would not be accurate to leave this as the entire picture of the scene in contemplation. Besides Nero, this tribunal was composed of men of rank and influence, who

had due respect for the responsibility resting upon them as members of Rome's highest court. Augustus Cæsar had strengthened the administration of justice at Rome in an attempt to establish a system of jurisprudence that would not be entirely under the domination of the Emperor.

In this case the prosecution had doubtless taken advantage of the two years' delay to gather testimony from various sections visited by Paul on his three missionary journeys, all of which were under Roman dominion. The charges against the defendant were necessarily the same as preferred before Felix and Festus, since the case was an appeal from the Roman court at Cæsarea. But the Roman law required the presence of accusers and witnesses, in the Emperor's court whenever available, and therefore the prosecution must have been prepared to present the case, *de novo*, in the most effective manner possible; and to that end had gathered witnesses ready to testify to acts sustaining the charges in the indictment. The first charge, of disturbing the religious institutions of the Jews (see Chapter 29), was not calculated to arouse great interest, although the Roman law protected them in the exercise of their worship. It also guaranteed their temple at Jerusalem against desecration, which was involved in the second count of the indictment. But the third count—against stirring up the people—presented a serious aspect at that time, as the resentment, in any form, to the established order, might easily be magnified into treason in the eyes of a Roman court. This was due to the fact that any act calculated to agitate the people aroused suspicion, because it was well known that the resentment to Roman rule by the Jews was sensitive and serious.

The only estimate of the proceedings that can be drawn is from the spirit shown in the presentation of the case

before Felix and Festus; and it is hardly probable that Paul's relentless enemies would present evidence and argument with less determination in the Emperor's court, where the decision was final. In addition, the history of what was required in that court at that time is helpful in determining, in general, what must have happened. Usually both plaintiff and defendant were represented by counsel. It is doubtful if Paul had a lawyer to represent him, which fact was not so serious, in the light of his former experiences in similar situations. He had stood before a Roman court at Antioch, where he was ordered to leave the town; and again at Philippi, where he suffered severe sentence of scourging, but later called the trial judges to the humiliating performance of duty, in publicly ordering his discharge. He had listened to vehement charges against him when he was arraigned before Gallio, a Roman judge at Corinth, and calmly received his acquittal without being required to present testimony in his own behalf. He had argued his cause before a Greek tribunal at Athens, composed of hypercritical members. He had been surrounded at Jerusalem by fanatical judges of the greatest Hebrew court that ever sat, and by clever strategy escaped their cruel judgment. Before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa he showed himself capable of meeting argument of both fact and law, presented by the same determined prosecutors who were seeking his conviction by "Cæsar's court." Experience in method of procedure and knowledge of the law had eliminated any "stage fright" that might threaten his mental equilibrium, and he was ready to meet his accusers, even though they were resourceful in preparation and talent, to conduct the prosecution before the imperial court that was to determine his earthly destiny. If desired, each count of the indictment might be tried separately; but it

can consistently be presumed that all the forces of the prosecution were centered on the third charge, that amounted to treason, the punishment for which was death. Nothing less would have satisfied the fanatical zeal with which they had pursued Paul, or have justified the expense of such elaborate prosecution. A stenographic report of the proceedings of this trial would furnish an interesting chapter of legal history, in the light of the subsequent influence of the defendant's work and words, but it doubtless made little impression at the time, as no record whatever was preserved. It would be sheer speculation to attempt to recall what was said; but with considerable degree of certainty we may assume that the usual practice was followed in this case as in other similar trials of that day. The procedure was, that after the witnesses were all examined and cross-examined, and the arguments of both sides concluded, each of the assessors gave his opinion in writing to the Emperor, who rendered judgment, after due consideration, and usually in accordance with the recommendation of the majority of the associate justices or assessors.

A Jewish defendant was, during that period, in an unwholesome atmosphere anywhere in Rome, as the race was restless under Roman rule, which was resented by the officers of the Imperial government. The representatives from Jerusalem knew that Poppæa, wife of Nero, was friendly to the Jews, because she had successfully interceded with Nero in their behalf, in a local controversy with Festus, involving the removal of a wall built in connection with the temple at Jerusalem, obstructing the view of the royal palace, which was displeasing to the procurator (Josephus, "Antiquities," XX, 8). Since Nero, in rendering judgments, gave less consideration than his predeces-

sors to the recommendations of the assessors, the prosecution may have been more hopeful of the wife's influence over the Emperor than his associates on the bench.

Paul could meet any charge that could be truthfully made concerning his loyalty to the Roman government. He had freely discussed and estimated the laws of Moses, but he never reflected upon the authority of the Roman Empire. Indeed, so far as the record shows, he may have felt, as James Bryce of modern times, that "Law is Rome's greatest gift to the world."

The weight of authority, which is based upon quite sound reason, is to the effect that Nero followed the recommendations of the twenty assessors and pronounced judgment, releasing the prisoner, while doubtless realizing that he was the herald of a new religious faith.

For the first time in five years Paul was a free man, unfettered, and detached from a Roman squad. It is an accepted version that the judgment of the court included an order for him to leave Rome, which was not an uncommon form of acquittal. From the fragmentary references in the letters to Timothy and Titus, the diligent historian has traced his itinerary through Macedonia to Philippi, thence to Ephesus and Colossæ. Indeed some maintain that he realized his ambition to visit Spain and carry his message to the uttermost part of the world, that was known to him, but this conjecture has but slight evidence to support it.

During his subsequent travel, wherever it may have been, little is definitely known, except suggestions in his letters to Timothy and Titus, consideration of which should here be given, both for the historical significance of the suggestions therein, as well as the heroic spirit manifest in his practical instruction for the upbuilding of the kingdom.

It could hardly be conceived that this active hero remained idle or indifferent, and hence the logical course is to study his epistles to Timothy and Titus in order to follow with clearer understanding his movements in the later years of his life.

XXXVII

MESSAGE OF INSTRUCTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

(1 Timothy)

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."—PROV-
ERBS 29: 18.

WHEN Paul was released from Roman imprisonment, through acquittal by the Emperor's court, he was no doubt somewhat of a nervous wreck. For a quarter of a century he had been engaged at high tension, in a continuous contest with prejudice and persecution. His imprisonment had furnished him physical rest, but the nervous tension to a man of his temperament must have been terrific. His experience offers striking evidence of courage and endurance. His mind was still alert, and his ambition to carry on his work was apparently as keen as when he sailed from Seleucia on his first mission. He had maintained contacts with the churches he had established, through correspondence and personal conferences with representatives who had journeyed long distances to see him. While the order of acquittal compelled him to leave Rome, that was neither a hardship nor a disappointment. He had contemplated a trip to Philippi (Phil. 1: 26, 2: 24), as well as Colossæ (Philemon 22), and was equally interested in the intervening places where he had proclaimed the gospel and established congregations. It is a reasonable inference that, accompanied by Luke and Timothy, he first went to Ephesus shortly after his release. A program had been arranged, while he was in prison, that Timothy should go

to the Asian capital to correct a threatening situation there, growing out of the spread of Gnosticism and other doctrines that were disturbing the Christian converts.

Paul's regard for Timothy, as his "own son in the faith," was sincere and lasting. From the time, on his second mission, when he ordained the youthful convert as his associate, upon recommendation of the local church in Galatia, his appreciation of Timothy's faithfulness and his fine nature had gradually grown, through his close association with him in his campaign for Christianity.

There has been much interesting discussion as to the authenticity of Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus, usually referred to as his "Pastoral Letters," yet they are sufficiently authentic to furnish a consistent and pertinent subject of study in this connection; hence we accept their authorship without question.

Paul was intensely interested in Ephesus. He spent more than two years in establishing a congregation there, under fierce difficulties; and it occupied a strategic position among the churches of Asia Minor. Demoralizing influences were making sufficient headway in that vicinity to present a grave problem. Paul was more confident of Timothy's ability to cope with the crisis in this metropolis than was the young missionary himself. Timothy was timid, and he was more sensitive to that fact than was the Apostle. The task was difficult because of the fact that the people were not stable in their religious convictions, and hence were susceptible to the novelties and myths taught by shrewd and active enemies and rivals of Christianity. Possibly, Paul brought pressure upon him to continue the work, for he says, "I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1: 3).

A cosmopolitan community of heedless and indifferent people made the problem the more perplexing to Timothy, who was not of the militant type. He needed encouragement as well as instruction, and Paul's letter was a happy combination of advice and inspiration. Authorities differ as to whether Paul's first letter to Timothy was written at Philippi, or after his return from Macedonia, and while he was visiting Philemon and the churches in the Lycus Valley. If he wrote it while in Asia Minor, he was under the immediate environment of influences similar to those that surrounded Timothy at Ephesus. This would have made clear to the Apostle the necessity of overcoming doubt and distrust in the mind of his "son in the faith" when engaged in such a bewildering task.

Paul's reason for writing this letter and his estimate of Timothy can the better be appreciated by recalling his experience with him in their travels. Paul met Timothy, as a youth, on his first mission in his native town of Lystra, where the missionary suffered such brutal stoning by an infuriated mob that he was left unconscious. The vitality and courage he displayed in recovering from the cruel punishment, and in returning to the scene of suffering to complete his work, attracted the youth, who became an active disciple and won the confidence of the local brethren. When Paul returned to Galatia on his second mission, he ordained Timothy as an associate missionary and had him join in the journey through Asia to Troas and thence to Macedonia. After their escape from Philippi and after Paul and his coworkers were driven from Thessalonica to Berea, where Paul was being pursued by persistent Jews, Timothy had sufficient courage to remain there (Acts 17: 14, 15), when the Apostle was being dispatched to Athens for his personal safety.

Thereafter Timothy returned to Thessalonica, where he remained until he and Silas went to the Apostle at Corinth, to make report of conditions in the Thessalonian congregation (1 Thess. 3: 1-8). That he made friends with those people is shown by Paul's including him in the greetings to both of his letters to the Thessalonians.

On his third mission Paul had Timothy to precede him into Macedonia, where he subsequently joined him and wrote the second letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 1: 1). Timothy was with Paul in Corinth when he wrote the letter to the Romans, and accompanied him to Troas and on his trip to Jerusalem with contributions from Galatia.

His appreciation of Timothy's gentle nature prompted the statement in the letter that "the aim of Christian discipline is the love that springs from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith" (1: 5). The Jews were evidently still extolling the value of the Hebrew law, and in answer Paul declared, "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully"—that is, to restrain the lawless and disobedient. But "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1: 15)—not through threats of restraint and punishment, but through regeneration that comes with a spirit of love and mercy, and "the knowledge of the truth." He emphasized the value of "a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty," to the glory of the "immortal, invisible, the only wise God." He enumerates the qualifications of a bishop or a deacon, as vigilance, sobriety, hospitality, patience, experience, and good standing—without "greed of filthy lucre." Paul's immediate reason for writing to Timothy was that he could not go to him at that time, as he had contemplated, and the greater his disappointment since he realized that controversy was

rife. His idea was to avoid it as much as possible, and to answer it, wherever practicable, with exemplary conduct. "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." He was seeking to prevent his followers from departing from the faith, for he knew the powerful influences of "seducing spirits" which were operating at Ephesus, and offering "doctrines of the devil."

He warned Timothy against the possible discredit of him on account of his youth, which could only be successfully encountered by showing himself "an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." By showing deference to his elders, fraternal interest in the younger men, and charity to deserving widows, his work was sure to be effective.

Paul had no patience with "tattlers" or "busybodies," but measured all by the test of a "pure conscience" and "good works." He recognized the relation of master and servant as one which required service by the slave and appreciation by the owner, "because they are brethren" (6: 2). His admonition against strife, envy, and railings was because they encountered hate and unhappiness. "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (6: 6). In warning against avarice he declared that "the love of money is the root of all evil" (6: 10), and urged Timothy to "follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness." He did not condemn those who were rich, but charged them to avoid arrogance and so conduct themselves "that they be rich in good works," and thereby "lay hold on eternal life." Paul was endeavoring to stimulate Timothy's initiative and resolution. So many things required correction that the catalogue necessarily covered a wide field. When the Apostle classed himself as "the chief of sinners," he meant to furnish Timothy incentive with

such an example of the love of Christ as a power unto salvation. Evidently there had been imposition upon the Church by unworthy widows, seeking support through its charities. This not only furnished occasion for Paul to warn against such abuse, but gave him opportunity to express himself in an uncomplimentary fashion as to the influence of such women, which has resulted in much discussion as to his estimate of the gentler sex. It can only be explained by the wide variance of standing of women then and to-day. He had shown genuine appreciation of such women as Phœbe, Eunice, Lydia, and Priscilla. Timothy must have made some injudicious selections of leaders, called presbyters, which had caused embarrassment. Paul's advice on the qualifications of church officials was approved by Timothy, but he had been imposed upon, and his mistakes were mortifying. Since this letter was clearly intended for publication in some form, Paul's observations on this question were evidently intended for public direction more than private advice. There was an element of warning and rebuke in what he said which was more personal to the presbyters than to Timothy. The same is true of the vexatious heresies which Paul condemns, and which no doubt Timothy was endeavoring to expose. "Perverse disputings of men with corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth," were insidious influences, difficult to combat, and the Apostle made his final appeal, that the young missionary cultivate a heroic spirit. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art called."

XXXVIII

A RELEASED CALL TO ACTION

(Epistle to Titus)

"Better to stem with heart and hand
The roaring tide of life, than lie
Unmindful on the glittering strand
Of God's occasions floating by."

—JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER.

PAUL had always enjoyed co-operation with his fellow men, because he truly believed in them. The significance of his attachments was shown in the reliance he placed in his associates. His confidence and courage, though extraordinary, did not cause him to assume superiority over his fellows. He was free from egotism. To be "an apostle of Jesus Christ" was, to him, to be a servant of the Master. He was democratic in his attitude toward all with whom he came in contact, and eagerly craved the companionship of his coadjutors. Two of his favorites were Timothy and Titus. Each was a Greek, although Timothy's mother (Eunice) was a Jewess, and out of deference to the traditions of her religion Paul had her son circumcised, while withholding the right from Titus, since no racial code required its observance with him. Both of these confrères were in the Apostle's counsel at Rome, where definite and responsible work was outlined for each. Timothy was assigned to Ephesus, and Titus was sent to Crete, the central island in the Mediterranean, between Europe and Asia Minor, where he was to exercise the authority of a bishop, "the steward of God." Paul had not spent any time on

this island, although its position was strategic and important; but he had passed along its border and possibly surveyed its mountains from the deck of the ship that carried him a prisoner to Rome. The epistle which he addressed to Titus was evidently intended for publication, for it defines his authority and contains illuminating admonition as to the imperative discipline of Christian service. It was indeed a call to action.

Paul met Titus somewhere on his first missionary journey. He is first mentioned in the record, as we have it, at the Council at Jerusalem, where he was deliberately taken as "Exhibit A," in the stubborn controversy which turned out to be a test case over the circumcision of Gentile Christians. Thereafter he was frequently the Apostle's missionary companion and emissary in the field of his activities. He loomed large in settling the threatening troubles in the Corinthian churches, and his connection with this severe crisis developed in him a degree of prudence, diplomacy, and resourcefulness that qualified him for a position of difficulty and responsibility. Paul felt that he was the man to "set in order the things wanting" at Crete, and hence gave him authority "to ordain elders in every city," of which, according to Pliny, there were quite a number on that populous island. The obstacles there were formidable; and if ever there was a call for transformation in the life of a people it was the summons answered by Bishop Titus. The inhabitants of this island bore an odious reputation. In addition to being avaricious and unscrupulous in their dealings—"vain talkers and deceivers"—drunkenness was prevalent, with the women as well as the men. Juvenal, the Latin poet, tells of the famous wine of Crete. Paul paraphrases an estimate of the Cretans, made by one of their own prophets, who styled

them as "always liars, evil beasts of prey, lazy gluttons," and of "a bad brood." While it was called the "birthplace of Hellenic civilization," there were many Jews in the cities and towns, some of whom were imbued with the Gnostic spirit that had been, and was then, such a disturbing factor in the Lycus Valley, and others were active, generally, in their opposition to Christian influences.

There must have been a number of Christian congregations on the island, which is one hundred and sixty miles in length and varies in width from eight to thirty-five miles. The work of Titus was to supervise, organize, and instruct the leaders in a more active campaign for Christianity.

To that end Paul definitely directed him to "speak the things which become sound doctrine." But first he admonished him that his own personal character should be an example of purity, strength, and activity, which applied with equal force to the elders appointed by him.

Paul's letter to Titus was thoroughly practical. It was intended to meet conditions on the island of Crete, which were deplorable, and concerns us in our study here because similar situations have existed in many places since that time. Aside from the specific evils threatening the Cretans, with which Paul dealt, the general admonitions are as applicable now as they apparently were then. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and world lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (2: 11-14).

The conflict between Judaism and Christianity is nothing like so sharp now as when the Apostle warned against the "many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, especially they of the circumcision," "whose mouths," he advised, "must be stopped." He further warned against Jewish fables at variance with the truth, and condemned that suspicious attitude of mind that questions truth and purity. His directions to both husband and wife, as to sobriety, charity, patience, fidelity to home—as essential to righteous and godly living in the world as it then existed—express religious principles which have been applicable to the experience of mankind through the centuries and are yet just as fundamentally essential in a people "zealous of good works."

Disobedience and deceit, living in malice and hate, as well as contentions and strivings about the law, were all declared "unprofitable and vain." The Apostle inventoried the habits which destroy character and retard spiritual development; and against these he catalogued the virtues essential to consistent and continuous growth and progress under a gospel of holiness. He commended hospitality, tact, and patience, but not to the sacrifice of sound doctrine and sane living. He gave "all authority" to Titus to "rebuke" the Cretans "sharply" for their untruthfulness, their bestiality, and their slothfulness. There was no compromise as to such evils. He was appealing for a program of regeneration of these people, with a call to greater interest and activity in good works. The essential element of such a policy was the same here as he emphasized elsewhere—obedience to the promptings of a clean heart and an upright spirit. Paul always pressed for a way of living that would create a healthy mind and an exalted spirit. "Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto

them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

To profess to know God counts for naught in one who denies him in his daily conduct. The true test in religion is "to be ready to every good work." Paul evidently felt that the Cretans were suffering as the result of slothfulness, for he emphasizes action, expressed in "good works," as a prime necessity in bringing about their regeneration. Again Paul's admonition to Titus applies to-day, even indeed in Christian communities. The Churches of Crete were satisfied with profession and formal observances, which never appealed to Paul, who was ever alive to the danger of lethargy and self-satisfaction. Christianity means activity in a definite direction for "good works." Progress in religion consists in a program that involves knowing how to accomplish something concrete. An indefinite prayer to God for help will avail little as compared with an earnest supplication for light, strength, and guidance in the performance of specific acts to accomplish a definite purpose. This requires intelligent interest and the seeking of a clear-cut line of action; or more particularly the courage to do a single righteous deed, that is positive and for a fixed end. Titus was confronted with a tremendous task on this island in the Mediterranean. Paul was endeavoring to analyze the conditions and lay down a policy of procedure that would meet all the outstanding forces of evil. That would have been more difficult, but for the wide experience of the Apostle and his confidence in his convictions as to what constituted the best way of living. An inspiring fact about this letter to Titus is that it contains so much admonition that is helpful now to varied races, constituting a vastly different state of society, which has developed through nineteen centuries of progress.

How marvelous that the Christianity which Paul taught is adapted to such a wide range of human activity, and apparently under such a great change of conditions! In none of his letters is there found teaching more practical for meeting the problems of to-day than in his Epistle to Titus, designed for his ministry on this lone island of Crete, nearly two thousand years ago. He was seeking to establish religion in such a permanent way as adequately to meet human needs and world conditions. He pointed out the life values of our very existence. Progress, happiness, and hope depend upon the principles which he emphasized. They have been studied and tried so long, and by so many, that we can accept the valuation, established by time's cruel and sturdy processes, with a high degree of confidence.

.

XXXIX

SUFFERING HARDSHIP IN SERVICE

(2 Timothy)

"Join the ranks of those who bear suffering, like a loyal soldier of Christ Jesus."—2 TIMOTHY 2: 3.

IN his letter to Titus, Paul advised that he would winter at Nicopolis. There were a number of towns by that name and considerable confusion is found among the students of Paul as to which, of at least two of these places, he had in mind. But we conclude that he referred to Nicopolis in Epirus, a subdivision of Greece, along its western border, immediately north of Achaia and across the Adriatic Sea from lower Italy. He desired Titus to visit him there (Titus 3: 12), which he doubtless did, and was sent by the Apostle to Dalmatia (4: 10), north of Epirus. Others of his coadjutors were given special assignments; Crescens to Galatia, Tychicus to Ephesus, and Erastus to remain at Corinth. Demas had abandoned him, while Luke remained his constant companion (4: 11).

Somewhere, sometime (shortly after his letter to Titus), and on some charge, the exact nature of which is not definitely known, Paul was again taken in custody by Roman officials and lodged in prison at the capital city. His arrest may possibly have been at Troas, but more probably at Nicopolis.

It would be difficult, with the data in hand, to follow the Apostle from his acquittal by Nero's court until his return to Rome for his second imprisonment. As to the possibility of a visit to Spain, which he had contemplated (Rom. 15:

24), we have only the fragmentary reference from Clement, who wrote much about Christianity during the latter part of the first century, and refers to Paul as having "taught righteousness unto the whole world, and having reached the farthest bounds of the West." This has been given a somewhat strained construction, to mean that he went to Spain. There is not enough information available to justify further comment as to this particular ambition of the Apostle.

He had delegated certain authority over churches at Ephesus and on the isle of Crete to Timothy and Titus. While he was at liberty, he visited these places, as well as other sections where he had theretofore established churches. This must have covered a period of several years, during which time one of the greatest conflagrations of history had destroyed a vast portion of Rome, causing indescribable suffering and depression, which was followed by heartless persecutions of the Christians in the Imperial City under the direction of Nero. The fire had broken out on July 19, 64, near the section that was largely populated by Jews, which gave rise to the rumor that they were responsible for the conflagration. In self-defense, they in turn spread the report that the incendiaries were the disciples of Christ. Shortly before the fire, Nero, in a drunken revelry, had said that he would some day destroy Rome and rebuild a more magnificent city. Suspicion seized upon this statement to place the Emperor upon the defensive, and he was quick to join in the clamor against the Christians. The historian Tertullian credits Nero with the statement, "*Christiani non sint*"—"Let there be no Christians." The fury was so great that the depraved Emperor had to make public display of his indignation, for his own safety. Tacitus says that the Christians "were

put to death with exquisite cruelty, and to their suffering Nero added mockery and derision. Some were covered with skins of wild beasts and left to be devoured by dogs; others were nailed to the cross; numbers were burned alive; and many, covered with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night." The author adds: "It was evident that they fell a sacrifice, not for the public good, but to glut the rage and cruelty of one man only" ("Annals," Book XV, 44).

For such spectacles Nero used his private gardens to entertain his debauched and depraved guests and to gratify his own base nature. This monstrous turmoil created a vastly different situation at Rome from that which confronted Paul on his first imprisonment. He was now incarcerated in a real prison, with dungeon accessories. He received harsher treatment than before. Prejudice against the Christians was so intense that his friends were afraid to show him favors. He was held in strict confinement and suffered severe discomfort from the exposure of an unsanitary cell. Under the depressing influence of loneliness, his mind turned to his "dearly beloved son," Timothy, for whom he cherished the most sincere affection.

A man from Ephesus, Onesiphorous, visited him amid great difficulties, and Paul, realizing Timothy's sensitiveness, felt that he would be greatly discouraged if he should hear of his plight in this neglected prison. He wanted to cheer him in his trying mission. Indeed he was eager to help him in his work. His anxiety about Timothy overshadowed his concern for his own welfare. It took tremendous courage to write words of comfort under such conditions, but he poured his soul into his second letter to Timothy, who was then at Ephesus, suffering in the service assigned to him by Paul, who was also suffering, in a dif-

ferent manner, on account of similar services rendered in the cause of Christ. He naturally yielded to a spirit of reminiscence and glorified the faith of the mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) of the loyal missionary. He recalled the persecutions and afflictions which Timothy had witnessed him endure at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. He was now an old man, abandoned by his friends, charged as a malefactor, suffering from loneliness and privation, in a vile cell, because he had been faithful as "a herald and an apostle and a teacher" of the gospel of Christ Jesus, which brought knowledge of life and light of immortality to men. He was not "ashamed." With confident zeal he declared: "I know him whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (1: 12). This was a fine declaration of faith that his soul, committed to Christ, was safe against all hazards; and justified the injunction, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2: 1). "Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2: 3). He meant to impress upon Timothy that suffering and hardship were inevitable in every truly worth-while achievement, and that he was engaged in the most worthy service that could be performed by a human being. The persistent spirit of accomplishment dominated the sturdy old prisoner, and he was eager to prepare the missionary for "perilous times," when selfish, proud, unholy, false, wicked, worldly-minded persons would "creep into houses" and corrupt the curious women-folk and prevent them from attaining the knowledge of the truth. Paul always proclaimed the truth as the surest refutation of error. But some are slow to grasp the truth, or will not make the effort to comprehend it. He was then in "bonds" because he stood for truth;

"but," he declared, "the word of God is not bound" (2: 9). "The foundation of God standeth sure" (2: 19). Falsehood ever seeks to cloak its fallacies in the garb of truth, and many are unable to discriminate between them. "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and earth, and some of honor and some of dishonor" (2: 20). Herbert Spencer carried the thought still further in the expression, "There is no political alchemy by which you can get golden conduct out of leaden instincts." Realizing Timothy's tranquil nature, the Apostle warned him against strife, and admonished him to "be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves." But above all he must proclaim the Word and be urgent in season and out of season. "Reprove, rebuke, exhort"; with patience, but with courage, "do the work of an evangelist." He realized that this was his last message, and as his mental tension relaxed he faced the inevitable situation. He urged Timothy to come to him as soon as possible; and to bring Mark, who had accompanied him on his first mission, and whom he had denied on his second journey, but who evidently had been forgiven and was again held in genuine esteem. He now pays him high compliment by asking that he accompany Timothy on this farewell visit. He sends greetings to his companions at tent-making, Priscilla and Aquila, as well as other friends at Ephesus. He wanted so much his cloak, the books, and especially the parchments which he had left at Troas. The parchments were rolls of the Old Testament, and he requested Timothy to bring them with him. These constituted his earthly possessions and would compose the inventory of his estate at his death. Their inventory value was nil. It has been suggested that possibly he wanted to give his cloak to

Mark, his books to Luke—in the event it was then in contemplation to add to the book of Acts—and his parchments to Timothy. Paul's fine sentiment justifies this imaginative bequest of his meager possessions. His life work was evidenced by intangible yet definite accomplishments, quite more influential and powerful than material accumulations, and all of his estate was, in reality, left in trust. It has been well administered by voluntary trustees who have made it possible for his work and words to reach a large part of the human race, and provide the chart and guide of a way of living that has influenced the world in more effective manner than any tangible estate ever left by a human being. Considerable estates were left by crafty men of that day, but none have accumulated into such a heritage to mankind as that of this pioneer missionary. It cannot be measured by any of the standards of material things, either then or now. It has contributed more to the welfare of the race than all the wars of the Cæsars, which were then the outstanding accomplishments in the minds of the people, who placed high prize upon earthly ambition. Paul did not know when his final hearing would be, but his forebodings of the result were rather certain. He saw the end and in epitome he summed up the situation in striking and comprehensive manner, which made clear that he was prepared for the final call.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (4: 6-8). He fought a very different "fight" from that of any of his students to-day. The "course" he had fin-

ished has no parallel in modern times. But the "faith" he kept was the same faith that all Christendom now seek to keep. No improvement has been made in Paul's fidelity to that faith. His example is our inspiration. He exemplified faith and glorified it, with all the strength and courage he could command; for he believed that through it all mankind would inherit eternal life.

XL

COURAGE AND CONFIDENCE TO THE END

(2 Timothy)

"Truth forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
And, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow
Keeping watch above his own."

—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

PAUL had "finished the fight" when he wrote his second letter to Timothy. The hearing on his second trial had proceeded to the point where he had concluded his "first answer" (4: 16), in which he had made a full statement of the gospel, and "the heathen" heard his defense. Some suggest the idea that this letter was written during the ten-day period (provided by the Roman law) between sentence and execution. It seems more reasonable to conclude that there was a recess in the trial, possibly awaiting further evidence on behalf of the prosecution, or for some less material reason, as there was clearly a hope in the mind of the prisoner that he might see Timothy "before winter." It would have been impossible for this letter to have reached Timothy at Ephesus in time for his return to Rome within ten days. The text indicates further procedure was to be had by the court. The indictment may have contained more than one count; and the trial on the first count may have resulted favorably to the defendant, leaving counts on other charges to be heard, thus making it indefinite as to when the trial would terminate. Sepa-

rate hearings were frequently had on the several counts contained in an indictment.

When Paul wrote that "the Lord will deliver me from every evil work," he did not contemplate being released by the Roman court, but he had perfect confidence that no power on this earth could prevent his spirit from eternal existence in a heavenly kingdom, beyond the reach of earthly influence.

His experience, in defending himself in former trials, enabled him to sense the attitude of the court, and he realized that he would never again enjoy his earthly freedom. He had long anticipated the possibility that he would eventually meet some such situation as now confronted him; but there was never a man who had less fear of death. He told the elders at Miletus that he did not hold his "life of any account," when he had finished his course (Acts 20: 24). He had not surrendered. Evidently he had been arrested at a time when he was fighting valiantly for the cause to which he had dedicated his life. While he had been halted amid toil and strife, and was before a hostile court, under conditions which were most prejudicial to a Christian leader, his large experience had trained him to keep his courage. Above all he had absolute faith in Christ Jesus, to whom he had committed his soul until "that great day," which he was naturally contemplating, in happy confidence of the "crown of righteousness" that awaited him. But he meant to defend himself to the end.

As in other trials, he had presented his defense without an advocate to represent him before the court. His activity and zeal carried him through an experience of wide range and wretched conflicts, but he never deceived himself as to inevitable facts which might ultimately confront him. He knew the power of the government of which he was

now a prisoner, and he realized what it meant when that power was in the control of the personnel then exercising it. He was reconciled to the verdict long before it was given. While there is no record of the indictment against him, it is not a significant historical loss. It matters little what charges were preferred. It was at a time when rank injustice was being practiced by the greatest government then on earth.

From the procedure, on any kind of indictment upon which he might have been arraigned, it is hardly probable that Nero sat in judgment in his final trial. He had inaugurated the practice of having a magistrate conduct criminal trials within the Emperor's court. It was some such authority before whom Paul had been arraigned, and by whom the trial had been adjourned for further hearing. It is possible that Nero was not then in Rome, as he spent much time in Greece during the latter part of his reign; but his policies were, in large measure, still enforced by friendly representatives in charge of the government. If the indictment against Paul was in connection with the burning of Rome, the prosecution could not make out a case, as he was far away from the Imperial City when the conflagration broke out. There had been definite resentment among many of the Romans at the heartless persecution of innocent Christians by Nero on this charge; and since Paul was the leading Christian of the world at that time, there was danger of rebellion against the Emperor, if this innocent Roman citizen were condemned to death without the full formality of trial, on a definite charge against him. It is hardly probable that the Jews were in any direct way responsible for this prosecution. Roman authorities were not mindful of Jewish complaints or jealousies. It is possible that a new indictment was filed,

charging the defendant with violating the order of expulsion from Rome, which had been made a matter of record at the trial before the Emperor's court, several years before; or such charge may have constituted the second count of the indictment already filed. If so, he had no defense, provided he had returned to Rome before his arrest, which is not clear, although he may have deliberately returned to the devastated city when he heard of the brutal treatment that was being administered to the Christians. The shocking reports of heartless murders of his converts would naturally have stirred his blood. If by the supreme sacrifice he could have saved his brethren from further cruelty, he was ready to die; in which event, as a Roman citizen, he would be spared the slow, torturing death which other Christians had suffered, and by the same token he would not be "thrown to the lions" in the arena.

Already Nero had lost his prestige with the people, but his disgrace had not caused him to relent in his official persecution of the Christians, and Paul's prominence made him a desirable victim of the Emperor's wrath. It is certain that no one could charge that Paul had ever antagonized the Roman government, and no indictment could be sustained against him for disloyalty, which was then a prevailing suspicion against all Jews. His recent counsel to Timothy was that supplications and prayers be offered for kings and all in authority (1 Timothy 2: 1, 2); and he had written to Titus to be subject to rulers and those in authority (Titus 3: 1). This had been his consistent attitude all his life.

One Alexander, the metal worker, had been active against Paul (2 Tim. 4: 14); and he warned Timothy to beware of him, which indicated that he expected a prompt response to his call. He fully realized his peril, and he

estimated accurately the influences operating against him. His experience and his knowledge of the processes of the minds of men qualified him to make correct survey of the situation. He had escaped conspiracy after conspiracy that had been formed to put him to death, and his self-defense before Hebrew, Greek, and Roman courts enabled him to forecast the results of his arraignment.

There is not a line in the New Testament about how Paul met his death. But he made such impression that, even though he was known only as an itinerant missionary, and the significance of his work had neither been realized nor appreciated, the historian recognized him. Tertullian, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, states that Paul was beheaded at Rome. Other writers of Roman history report that he suffered martyrdom under Nero. If so, it was his right as a Roman citizen to be executed by the sword. Consistent with this, an ancient and persistent tradition tells us that Paul was finally convicted; and that he was led by centurion and soldiers through the Roman gate, that now bears his name, to a green level spot, surrounded by low hills near the Ostian Way, some three miles from the city. Three churches now stand to mark this venerable place. The crowd that surrounded the prisoner must have been a curious mixture of varied low-brow elements of the Roman populace. The officials in charge typified the spirit of the government, under Nero, with a cold, hard, and depraved sense of insolent and remorseless cruelty. In the indolent herd, that fell in line from the loafing rendezvous of that devastated city, there was a class, glad of an opportunity to gratify a debauched desire to see punishment officially administered to the hated Jew. The dignified pride of Roman tradition was not represented in this stupid and sullen throng, but in its stead the idle,

indifferent, ignorant, and slothful people of the community furnished the occasion with levity and hilarity. In the rear of the bloodthirsty mob were faithful and devoted friends of the condemned prisoner, with loyal, though heavy hearts, silent in the realization that they were about to witness the saddest scene their minds could contemplate. Amid it all Paul was trudging with weary and feeble body, but with sound and stout heart, reconciled and ready for the execution of the atrocious sentence. Whether his mind was reviewing his turbulent and heroic experiences of the past, or contemplating the glorious and eternal happiness that awaited him, it is certain that neither his confidence nor his courage faltered or failed him for a moment. He had engaged in a campaign for the spiritual conquest of the world, through faith in Jesus Christ, and by precept and example had furnished the finest expression of its operation that was ever exemplified.

It is all but unthinkable to us to-day that a great system of jurisprudence, such as had been established in the Roman Empire by Augustus, should have come under the administration of men with such a perverted sense of justice.

A Roman court had pronounced judgment, under which Christ was crucified, and another gave sentence under which his Apostle was awaiting execution, in ignorance of the fact that temporal orders, even under the sanction of governmental authority, are incapable of annihilating spiritual power, which is the most indestructible influence in all creation. Paul realized the eternal efficacy of this power. He was not deterred by "the things which are behind," but with perfect courage he ever stretched forth to the things that are before, pressing toward the work to which God had called him. In such spirit he "carried on"

to the end, with absolute confidence in his faith in Christ Jesus as the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. This faith has inspired heroic service, courageous sacrifice, and growing confidence through the centuries. St. Paul, as the herald of Christianity, gave impetus to an influence that has since been a dominant factor in stimulating and stabilizing the forces of civilization. The final picture of the execution of the judgment of the Roman court, by its duly constituted officials, is drawn from accepted tradition, based upon the most trustworthy historical data available.

The prisoner was in that frame of mind where peril had no terror and punishment only meant the earlier realization of his "strong desire to depart and be with Christ." What indescribable satisfaction he must have experienced as his life's panorama flashed through his mind, and he realized that he had grown in faith and confidence and courage to the end. This enabled him to withstand the final cruel and brutal scourging of a heartless and fiendish official, and to voluntarily kneel as the black cap was drawn to blind his eyes from earth's vanishing scenes.

The flash of a Roman sword, swung by the strong arm of an experienced executioner, and the earthly activities of the greatest religionist of all time were terminated.

rate hearings were frequently had on the several counts contained in an indictment.

When Paul wrote that "the Lord will deliver me from every evil work," he did not contemplate being released by the Roman court, but he had perfect confidence that no power on this earth could prevent his spirit from eternal existence in a heavenly kingdom, beyond the reach of earthly influence.

His experience, in defending himself in former trials, enabled him to sense the attitude of the court, and he realized that he would never again enjoy his earthly freedom. He had long anticipated the possibility that he would eventually meet some such situation as now confronted him; but there was never a man who had less fear of death. He told the elders at Miletus that he did not hold his "life of any account," when he had finished his course (Acts 20: 24). He had not surrendered. Evidently he had been arrested at a time when he was fighting valiantly for the cause to which he had dedicated his life. While he had been halted amid toil and strife, and was before a hostile court, under conditions which were most prejudicial to a Christian leader, his large experience had trained him to keep his courage. Above all he had absolute faith in Christ Jesus, to whom he had committed his soul until "that great day," which he was naturally contemplating, in happy confidence of the "crown of righteousness" that awaited him. But he meant to defend himself to the end.

As in other trials, he had presented his defense without an advocate to represent him before the court. His activity and zeal carried him through an experience of wide range and wretched conflicts, but he never deceived himself as to inevitable facts which might ultimately confront him. He knew the power of the government of which he was

now a prisoner, and he realized what it meant when that power was in the control of the personnel then exercising it. He was reconciled to the verdict long before it was given. While there is no record of the indictment against him, it is not a significant historical loss. It matters little what charges were preferred. It was at a time when rank injustice was being practiced by the greatest government then on earth.

From the procedure, on any kind of indictment upon which he might have been arraigned, it is hardly probable that Nero sat in judgment in his final trial. He had inaugurated the practice of having a magistrate conduct criminal trials within the Emperor's court. It was some such authority before whom Paul had been arraigned, and by whom the trial had been adjourned for further hearing. It is possible that Nero was not then in Rome, as he spent much time in Greece during the latter part of his reign; but his policies were, in large measure, still enforced by friendly representatives in charge of the government. If the indictment against Paul was in connection with the burning of Rome, the prosecution could not make out a case, as he was far away from the Imperial City when the conflagration broke out. There had been definite resentment among many of the Romans at the heartless persecution of innocent Christians by Nero on this charge; and since Paul was the leading Christian of the world at that time, there was danger of rebellion against the Emperor, if this innocent Roman citizen were condemned to death without the full formality of trial, on a definite charge against him. It is hardly probable that the Jews were in any direct way responsible for this prosecution. Roman authorities were not mindful of Jewish complaints or jealousies. It is possible that a new indictment was filed,

charging the defendant with violating the order of expulsion from Rome, which had been made a matter of record at the trial before the Emperor's court, several years before; or such charge may have constituted the second count of the indictment already filed. If so, he had no defense, provided he had returned to Rome before his arrest, which is not clear, although he may have deliberately returned to the devastated city when he heard of the brutal treatment that was being administered to the Christians. The shocking reports of heartless murders of his converts would naturally have stirred his blood. If by the supreme sacrifice he could have saved his brethren from further cruelty, he was ready to die; in which event, as a Roman citizen, he would be spared the slow, torturing death which other Christians had suffered, and by the same token he would not be "thrown to the lions" in the arena.

Already Nero had lost his prestige with the people, but his disgrace had not caused him to relent in his official persecution of the Christians, and Paul's prominence made him a desirable victim of the Emperor's wrath. It is certain that no one could charge that Paul had ever antagonized the Roman government, and no indictment could be sustained against him for disloyalty, which was then a prevailing suspicion against all Jews. His recent counsel to Timothy was that supplications and prayers be offered for kings and all in authority (1 Timothy 2: 1, 2); and he had written to Titus to be subject to rulers and those in authority (Titus 3: 1). This had been his consistent attitude all his life.

One Alexander, the metal worker, had been active against Paul (2 Tim. 4: 14); and he warned Timothy to beware of him, which indicated that he expected a prompt response to his call. He fully realized his peril, and he

estimated accurately the influences operating against him. His experience and his knowledge of the processes of the minds of men qualified him to make correct survey of the situation. He had escaped conspiracy after conspiracy that had been formed to put him to death, and his self-defense before Hebrew, Greek, and Roman courts enabled him to forecast the results of his arraignment.

There is not a line in the New Testament about how Paul met his death. But he made such impression that, even though he was known only as an itinerant missionary, and the significance of his work had neither been realized nor appreciated, the historian recognized him. Tertullian, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, states that Paul was beheaded at Rome. Other writers of Roman history report that he suffered martyrdom under Nero. If so, it was his right as a Roman citizen to be executed by the sword. Consistent with this, an ancient and persistent tradition tells us that Paul was finally convicted; and that he was led by centurion and soldiers through the Roman gate, that now bears his name, to a green level spot, surrounded by low hills near the Ostian Way, some three miles from the city. Three churches now stand to mark this venerable place. The crowd that surrounded the prisoner must have been a curious mixture of varied low-brow elements of the Roman populace. The officials in charge typified the spirit of the government, under Nero, with a cold, hard, and depraved sense of insolent and remorseless cruelty. In the indolent herd, that fell in line from the loafing rendezvous of that devastated city, there was a class, glad of an opportunity to gratify a debauched desire to see punishment officially administered to the hated Jew. The dignified pride of Roman tradition was not represented in this stupid and sullen throng, but in its stead the idle,

indifferent, ignorant, and slothful people of the community furnished the occasion with levity and hilarity. In the rear of the bloodthirsty mob were faithful and devoted friends of the condemned prisoner, with loyal, though heavy hearts, silent in the realization that they were about to witness the saddest scene their minds could contemplate. Amid it all Paul was trudging with weary and feeble body, but with sound and stout heart, reconciled and ready for the execution of the atrocious sentence. Whether his mind was reviewing his turbulent and heroic experiences of the past, or contemplating the glorious and eternal happiness that awaited him, it is certain that neither his confidence nor his courage faltered or failed him for a moment. He had engaged in a campaign for the spiritual conquest of the world, through faith in Jesus Christ, and by precept and example had furnished the finest expression of its operation that was ever exemplified.

It is all but unthinkable to us to-day that a great system of jurisprudence, such as had been established in the Roman Empire by Augustus, should have come under the administration of men with such a perverted sense of justice.

A Roman court had pronounced judgment, under which Christ was crucified, and another gave sentence under which his Apostle was awaiting execution, in ignorance of the fact that temporal orders, even under the sanction of governmental authority, are incapable of annihilating spiritual power, which is the most indestructible influence in all creation. Paul realized the eternal efficacy of this power. He was not deterred by "the things which are behind," but with perfect courage he ever stretched forth to the things that are before, pressing toward the work to which God had called him. In such spirit he "carried on"

to the end, with absolute confidence in his faith in Christ Jesus as the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever. This faith has inspired heroic service, courageous sacrifice, and growing confidence through the centuries. St. Paul, as the herald of Christianity, gave impetus to an influence that has since been a dominant factor in stimulating and stabilizing the forces of civilization. The final picture of the execution of the judgment of the Roman court, by its duly constituted officials, is drawn from accepted tradition, based upon the most trustworthy historical data available.

The prisoner was in that frame of mind where peril had no terror and punishment only meant the earlier realization of his "strong desire to depart and be with Christ." What indescribable satisfaction he must have experienced as his life's panorama flashed through his mind, and he realized that he had grown in faith and confidence and courage to the end. This enabled him to withstand the final cruel and brutal scourging of a heartless and fiendish official, and to voluntarily kneel as the black cap was drawn to blind his eyes from earth's vanishing scenes.

The flash of a Roman sword, swung by the strong arm of an experienced executioner, and the earthly activities of the greatest religionist of all time were terminated.

